

“THOUGH LAND BE OUT OF SIGHT . . .”

The Early Years of CHORLEYWOOD COLLEGE

(for the higher education of girls with little or no sight)

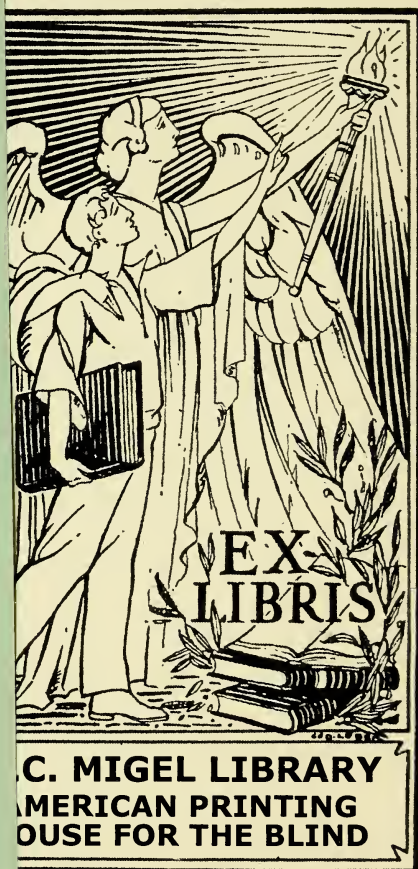
COMPILED BY
PHYLLIS MONK

THIS book forms an intimate biography of a school—the first and only one of its kind—during its early years (1921—1944). It shows, through the voices of the first headmistress and of teachers and pupils, how the handicap of blindness was tackled, and how the zest for life experienced by its first pupils led on to ever-increasing independence in daily life, in work and games and clubs.

One chapter deals with adaptations in teaching, another with after-school careers, which are also summarised in an appendix with a list of all pupils of the period.

Readers will see how these girls, challenged by blindness, rose to the opportunities of a liberal education and found fullness of life, whether, in scholarly fashion, through the universities or, by humbler channels, fitting into the needs of their times.

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THE EARLY YEARS OF CHORLEYWOOD COLLEGE

Compiled by
PHYLLIS MONK

Dedicated to the memory of

CAPTAIN SIR BEACHCROFT TOWSE, V.C., K.C.V.O., C.B.E.

HV 1950

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FOREWORD

ALTHOUGH this story of Chorleywood College—from its inception in 1920 to its emergence (under the Education Act of 1944) as the one Grammar School for girls with little or no sight—appears above my name, it owes much to my collaborators, and especially to the two former mistresses and four old pupils who contributed part of three chapters. And many current descriptions of school activities have been quoted from our own magazines.

I wish to thank Miss C. Day, Mr. de la Mare Rowley and Miss M. G. Thomas for suggestions and advice in preparing the manuscript for publication.

PHYLLIS MONK.

INTRODUCTION

OUR title, "Though Land be out of sight . . .," is a quotation from the School Song, "Our Ship," the song of Chorleywood College, a school for the higher education of blind and partially blind girls, the first and only one of its kind. The book is a record of the first twenty-four years of the school's life, compiled by Miss Phyllis Monk who became its first Headmistress in 1920, and continued in office until 1944. Girls and staff have collaborated in the writing, and material has also been drawn from School Magazines, from Reports and from reminiscences of Old Girls. It was the Old Girls who desired to have such a book undertaken. Thus the school's story has been written, first and foremost, for those who know and love Chorleywood College and for those who will do so.

There are others into whose hands this book may come—parents, educationists and social workers, who may know little of blindness. To them, it is hoped that the day-to-day detail of our account may not come amiss, for it is through this detail that they will discover the way blind children attack the stumbling blocks that lie before them as they seek to find an independence that alone will convey them into "sighted" life. Teachers may be interested to follow the necessary steps in adaptation and equipment, if the blind pupil is to follow the lead of her "sighted" friends. How all this has worked out, will be read in the Chapter "After-School Careers."

There is a kinship in most of us for adventure. This story, however, is not one which moves from one dizzy height to another. It contains the essence of adventure, "the daily round, the common task." But detail, "dealing with things, item by item," as the Concise Oxford Dictionary explains it, was a very true experience of ours during those growing years, as the three of us went along together—the girls who were blind, the girls who were not so blind and the staff who could only imagine blindness. Not that blindness preoccupied us. But, like the sea beneath "The Ship," it bore along our experiences and now has made a story which, it seems, should not be left only in the memory, unique to us.

Memory is a knowledge which cannot be matched, rooted in a true emotion, never forgotten. The evening dark, sliding to the uncurtained windows of the classroom, the sighing of wind in the cedars, the steady silence of night; would these have struck the mind in the same way if we had been just another educational establishment? The chorus of the spring, those scented summer days, the spacious beauty over which the cedars spread their centuries, seemed to understand our purpose, seemed to fortify our way of living, so that to walk in at the gate of the drive was to be

received into a life which offered more and expected more, than life outside. These were our green years, and such cannot be cut and dried without destruction. We were growing and expecting.

To those who would recapture what once they knew, and to those who would "catch the transient hour" of our adventuring, here is a true picture of the long day which closed with twenty-four years. As one who knew most of that time, I have been absorbed by the book.

To you who enter our life for the first time, the response will be different. To you our story is perhaps a revelation. You are right in thinking that whatever was done, was done by all. It is to those "all," whether in the school or outside it, that this Introduction would offer the loving regard which belongs to those who, by their imagination, courage and purpose, launched, served and made seaworthy "Our Ship."

GWEN UPCOTT.

CONTENTS

Chapter

I	BEFORE THE FIRST TERM	...	...	...	...	9
II	THE FIRST TERM—AT JORDANS	...	...	...	...	14
III	AT THE CEDARS...	...	...	...	...	22
IV	A CRISIS—AND FRIENDS MADE DURING IT	...	...	...	...	28
V	GROWTH	...	...	...	...	38
VI	OUR WAYS, INCLUDING GAMES, CLUBS, ETC., AND MISS J. McEWAN'S SURVEY	...	...	...	...	53
VII	AS EXPERIENCED BY FOUR PUPILS	...	...	...	...	75
VIII	THE WAR YEARS	...	...	...	...	92
IX	ADAPTATIONS IN TEACHING ; AND THE EXPERIENCES OF A MEMBER OF THE STAFF (MISS DEAVIN)	...	...	...	...	104
X	AFTER-SCHOOL CAREERS	...	...	...	...	127

Appendices

A	SPORT-X	...	...	...	...	...	143
B	LIST OF PUPILS 1921 TO 1944, WITH OUTLINE OF CAREERS	...	...	...	...	...	146

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Between Pages</i>
THREE CHILDREN OF THE FIRST TERM—ARITHMETIC ... } WORKING IN THE LIBRARY (1934) }	16-17
CHORLEYWOOD COLLEGE } "DIPPING" IN THE LILY POOL (1936) } "CHICKENERS" (1936) } CAPTAIN SIR BEACHCROFT TOWSE, V.C. }	32-33
BRaille TABLE } PACKING BRaille BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY (1936)... .. } READING AND PLAYING FROM BRaille MUSIC (1939)... .. } COUNTRY DANCING (1935) }	48-49
SWIMMING POOL (1936) } A GYM. CLASS }	64-65
APPARATUS IN USE (1936) } MATHEMATICS APPARATUS IN USE (1939) } SCIENCE: WEIGHING WITHOUT SIGHT (1943) }	112-113
BRaille SHORTHAND MACHINE IN USE (1939) } WALL MAP ADAPTED FOR TOUCH (1943)... .. } "OUR SHIP": MUSIC AND WORDS } FREE TIME: KNITTING FOR THE FORCES (1943) }	128-129
GROUP GOING OUT TO SPORT X (1925) } A SPORT X TEAM (1929) }	144-145

CHAPTER I

BEFORE THE FIRST TERM

THE school began adventurously. Not only was it the first of its kind at home or abroad, but its plan and creation were put, with intention, into the charge of a headmistress and assistant staff who had no previous experience of blind pupils.

In 1917 the National Institute for the Blind had a gift from Mr. J. H. Batty of an estate at Chorleywood, The Cedars, thus clinching the Institute's decision to establish a school for the higher education of blind girls, a need to which the Governmental Departmental Committee for the Welfare of the Blind had drawn attention in its Report.

It was a grand gift. The Cedars, a mansion of French château style (rebuilt by John Gilliat, M.P., in 1865), still had fifty acres attached ; its chief glory the ancient cedars, cathedral-like in their poise, dominated the areas of park, lawns, shrubberies, and kitchen-garden. The house, spaciouly impressive, had been a much-loved family home, entertaining on generous lines, and was now, thanks to Mr. Batty's munificence, ready to be adapted by the National Institute for the Blind, to become the alma mater of the community which is the subject of this book. The remodelling was liberally planned in plumbing, heating, lighting, decoration, and in the building of additional rooms for domestic use, for music, handwork and studies ; even a second stairway was added. In 1919 an N.I.B. Report suggested good progress for early habitation.

In 1920 the President of the Institute, Sir Arthur Pearson, talked of the plan for a Blind Girls' College to Miss Gordon, then working as a V.A.D. at St. Dunstan's, and asked her to become its secretary ; then he added : " I must get a headmistress. Do you happen to know anyone ? " She replied : " Yes, I think I do," as she thought of me. We had both been pupils at Blackheath High School, and, meeting again on a holiday party, I had said, in reply to the question " What do you really want to do ? " " I suppose I want a kind of orphanage, to be responsible for the children's *whole* day—but not for raising funds." By 1920, after varied teaching experience, including high schools, a boarding school (Roedean), a training college and a county secondary school, I felt ready to try to put my ideas into practice ; and so, after interviews with the N.I.B. Council, a little exploring of the special work already being done among blind children, and some weeks for simmering thoughts, my plans crystallised ; in May, 1920, I was offered, and accepted, the charge of the school-to-be.

At the time of my appointment, there were on the Executive Council of the N.I.B. four distinguished men, all blind, who were leaders in the venture of staffing the school at its outset with sighted teachers ignorant of " blind " methods of education. They were

the President, Sir Arthur Pearson, Bt., C.B.E. ; the Chairman, Sir Washington Ranger, M.A., D.C.L. ; the Vice-Chairman, Captain E. B. B. Towse, V.C., and G. F. Mowatt, J.P. Mr. Mowatt had the special responsibility of initiating me into the work during the launching of the school. It is his portrait that hangs in the library. As a past pupil of Worcester College for Blind Boys and a member of its governing body, he satisfied my early request to see that school (founded in 1866) by planning a week-end visit, at the invitation of the Headmaster, G. C. Brown, M.A., and his wife. The visit not only made clear to me the possibilities opened up by such education, but led directly to the third appointment to the staff of the school—Miss Upcott. At that time she and I were sharing rooms in London, while she was a student at the School of Economics, and the invitation to Worcester was extended to my friend.

Her quick perception of the human problems involved, together with her ready humour and understanding, led to Mr. Mowatt's conviction that she should be in our new venture as Careers Secretary. Obviously it would be some time before the need of such an office would be felt, but she was able to give voluntary help during the time of preparation ; later she undertook visiting teaching, in order to make personal contact with the girls for whom careers would later be sought. The personal contacts and the teaching flourished ; her office as Careers Secretary remained a passing dream. We realised that we must have an assistant staff qualified to develop to the full the capacities of our pupils. The Executive Council sanctioned the appointment of the candidates whom I had interested in the project, all highly qualified and experienced specialists, drawn to the work by its experimental nature, and the appeal of helping individuals to overcome the baffling handicap of blindness.

So, during that summer of 1920, in time for the autumn term, Miss Christine Day and Miss Ida Riddell were appointed to the teaching staff. Miss Day's degree work covered English, French and Latin ; Miss Riddell was a physical training specialist, qualified too in gardening and weaving. The matron-housekeeper's post was filled by Miss D. Jukes, with a King's College Domestic Science Diploma.

In the summer of 1920 the prospectus was printed, simple in form, ambitious in scope. Headed by a photograph of the house, it read :

The Cedars is to be opened in September as a college for the higher education of girls who are totally blind or have no useful degree of sight. The education will be as liberal as in the best girls' public schools, and the physical and mental development thus afforded will enable blind girls to live full and active lives at school, at home and in professions.

The fees will be £35 a term and will be inclusive of full board and residence, ordinary medical attendance and laundry.

The National Institute for the Blind offers scholarships to girls of promise, in cases where full fees cannot be afforded.

The school curriculum will include Religious Knowledge, English, History, Geography, Mathematics, Science, Modern Languages, Classics, Domestic and other Arts and Crafts, Music (class-singing and instrumental), Gymnastics, Dancing, Gardening and other provisions for out-door exercise.

There will be three departments :—

1. Preparatory ; approximate ages 7 to 12 years.
2. Main School ; approximate ages 12 to 19 years.
3. Students over school age who wish to specialise in certain subjects.

Further particulars can be obtained from Miss Monk, National Institute for the Blind, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

Forms of application for admission and for exhibitions were drafted, the hunt for suitable furniture and other equipment begun. Later in the summer it became obvious that the work on the house could not possibly be finished by September. This must have been a blow, financially, to the N.I.B. ; but those of us already appointed to work *in* the school took the time to work *for* it, with ultimate advantage to all concerned.

In the autumn Miss Day went to France to brush up her French, while tackling Braille and other adaptations to blindness ; Miss Riddell wove the school hat-bands, and tweed and braid for the tunics ; living at Lee, near my Blackheath home, she was accessible for consultations over furniture, equipment for crafts teaching, gymnastics and much else, having the taste of an artist combined with practical common sense.

For me, those months were very full. Besides the buying of furniture and equipment, there was correspondence about, and interviews with, prospective pupils. Then there was the reading and writing of Braille, for which Miss Prince, of the National Library for the Blind, made the concession of arranging correspondence lessons which aimed at our reaching the standard needed by transcribers of Braille books. Mr. Brown, of Worcester College, had said airily, " You'll learn it in a fortnight." I did not. I learnt a great respect for it in less, realising the iniquity of making a faint or misplaced dot, and, when reading (although time did not permit me to tackle it by touch), the endless possibilities of those six dots, which no language sense, but only the sheer warfare of concentrated memory and practice, could help unravel. This practice had to be fitted into odd minutes, leading to ludicrous perplexities of the kind, later ridiculed in verse :—

In the days of long ago
 When she wasn't in the know
 She spread her out a book upon her knees.
 She said, " This Braille is good,
 Let it be understood
 That no one interrupts me, if you please."

In an hour we returned.
 She seemed to be concerned—
 But we soon applied a plaster to her frown ;
 We said : " Don't take on so,
 Just have another go,
 The volume, you observe, is upside down ! "

Braille writing we practised with a Stainsby-Wayne machine. This has six keys corresponding in position to the six Braille dots, and is manipulated by pressing in one movement the keys required for each sign. The dots are thus embossed on the reverse side, so requiring the paper to be turned over for reading.

This reference to a " Stainsby " will not, I hope, make an unfitting introduction to its inventor ; for Henry Stainsby was Secretary-General of the N.I.B. at the time of my appointment, and from his vantage point over correspondence and accounts, must have cast an anxious eye at the mounting figures of expenditure on the house, the staff, the furniture and equipment.

The simple beauty of much of the furniture will long remain to show how Miss Gordon and I interpreted our responsibilities. Those solid light oak tables and rush-seated chairs ; upstairs, in the dormitories, the oak chests and combination wash-stands ; and, in the staff bed-sitting-rooms, divans, bureaux, bookshelves, and all else to help happy efficiency. Much was made to our measurement at Heal's, who gave special prices that season when trade was slack, and much good work was done by Walker of Lee, an ex-service man just launching into business. The linen, cutlery, and china were good too. I wonder if any one piece of blue and black line tableware remains, to speak of its contribution to the culture of those early days ? Critical times, especially for charitable organisations such as the N.I.B., followed all too soon, bringing china replacements to a different level ! But I believe most of the choices made, after exhaustive search, were justified and have not proved extravagant.

Before the end of 1920 I had gained further impressions of the special character of the work, by watching blind children in some of their elementary schools, and by talking with those who taught them. The heads of these schools were most courteous, kind and helpful, although I started by being one of the typical visitors, whose incredulity and wonder at what could be done without sight afterwards began to seem tiresome and stupid ! " Are they *both* blind ? " I asked Miss Falconer, of Birmingham, when the knock

at her door proclaimed two pupils, imagining, in my ignorance, that blind people would be unable to go about unguided. I soon recovered from this stage and switched perhaps to the other extreme, expecting free movement and independent management to be acquired by all. I had come too to realise more clearly that the word "blind" was used at the N.I.B. and in these special schools, for children with some sight as well as for those with none; and I decided that, although it seemed practicable for them to be educated together, our next prospectus should have the sub-title "For girls with little or no sight," and so be misleading to none—parents, children or public.

So, with five pupils definitely booked to begin in January, correspondence afoot about a number of others, and an assistant staff ready for the full complement of girls (any number up to forty-five), we felt ready to take the plunge. But, again, anticlimax! Workmen with colossal tasks ahead were still in full occupation at The Cedars; and school there in the January was thus made impossible.

But we found a solution.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST TERM—AT JORDANS

AT Old Jordans Hostel, in the neighbouring county of Bucks, about eight miles from The Cedars, a new wing had just been completed, and my idea that we might start work there was accepted by the Committees of the N.I.B. and of the Hostel. This lovely place, the farm where the first Quakers used to meet about 1669, with its Mayflower barn, refectory and charming garden, became the school's temporary home. Miss Woodhead, the warden, and her staff, added us to their guests. We occupied all the new wing, and overflowed, at special times, into the beautiful brick-floored room, with its polished wood and shining copper and brass—once the kitchen, and now a centre of attraction for a succession of appreciative visitors.

So on 19th January, 1921, at Jordans, pupils and staff of Chorleywood College first met. The number of staff was somewhat large for five pupils, for we had pictured a bigger start, and a wide curriculum had to be provided. Miss C. Hallam (London Hospital trained) had been appointed, her chief charge the care of the health of the community; Mr. A. E. Bevan visited twice a week to teach music, and Miss C. Bevan (no connection!) came weekly for Scripture. Miss Gordon waited to join our ranks at the end of the term.

The five of us who were to be resident arrived the Saturday before term, to receive the furniture and equipment, and to place it so that we could make the most of our little space. A small end room for its double rôle of class-room and staff-room, contrived to hold a piano, a big desk, bureau and chairs. The refectory became the handwork-room, the Mayflower barn our gymnasium. Future pupils might well covet the tiny single bedrooms of our first term!

To this unique place came our first children, five at the start, increasing to seven. That they too felt it an adventure there is no doubt—and who can tell how much the school's character was influenced by those intimate early contacts of personalities so diverse, when teachers and taught were all so willing to learn?

Rona, from Yorkshire, was already seventeen, with a useful degree of sight which needed protection. She had her mother's profession—teaching—in mind, and quickly became looked up to by the others as an unofficial kind of head girl. In Rona, we first met that in-between degree of sight at once too small for satisfactory work in an ordinary school, and too much to make Braille her natural medium. In these cases the opinions of doctors and parents would often vary as to the right course to take, but when Chorleywood was finally chosen it was on the clear understanding that reading and writing would be chiefly in Braille. The school was primarily for girls who could not read print, and as

free access to books was essential to a liberal education, those books must be Braille ones. Rona's mother was ambitious for her to do more advanced work than would be possible through print, with the limitations in amount and in the size of the type it was then considered wise to impose.

Joan was thirteen, an artist born and bred; with experience of a school life where her bad sight was out of place. In Joan we discovered the difficulty—to recur often in different degrees—of a drifting attention, through having been unable to tackle on equal terms the work of her "sighted" class; interests alive, questions abounding, but lack of the groundwork for assimilating the answers. A difficulty faced and overcome? Definitely, as her career as a musician has testified.

Stella, aged eleven, was a doctor's daughter. A home friend had well named her "Love-in-the-mist," for she was a beautiful child, happy and affectionate, but with health problems that made her school life all too short. Stella illustrates another Chorleywood feature: from a cultured home with other members of the family at carefully selected schools, she came to Chorleywood, where conditions compared with theirs. But her health was held up by troubles more fundamental than her blindness, and she could not go far intellectually, though she thrived socially. In those early years we were able to include some girls whose general condition and lack of stamina needed the conditions we could offer, but for whom the full educational curriculum was out of reach. As I think of these girls one by one, I am fully convinced that they educated *us*, staff and students, and called forth auntly or sisterly understanding that may have little chance of growth in a big and bustling school.

Hilda was ten, an unpractical day-dreamer, from whose mind delightful songs would spring, as well as dramatic make-believe. She has remained a mystery to me, for who would expect the mind of a natural poet and songster, whose fantasies gave life to many occasions that Jordans term, to be also a chronologically accurate recorder of times and events? "May I now sing you this song?" she would say to her partner on a walk, and out would come one of her own charming little compositions. This was one:—

I have wondered why the wind whistles,
And perhaps you have wondered too?
Well, he feels very cross, and he bristles,
And doesn't know what to do.
So he wandereth into a town,
Where groweth some thistle-down,
And he pricketh himself with the thistles,
And that is why the wind whistles.

At breakfast, after inefficient struggles to dress herself, her feet attacking the nightdress case in mistake for her knickers, she

would continue her inimitable serial story, the chief characters of which were the " Cunettes," who came to her rescue when " thistles pricked " or worse !

Perhaps more revealing was her song The Daffodil :

Come up, little daffodil !
Spring has wakened all the flowers ;
Cuckoo's voice is loud and shrill ;
Birds have been awake for hours.

Chorus : Fairies whisper on the hill,
" Come up, little daffodil."

I was planted late yestre'en
In my place I lay serene ;
Leave me, fairies, go away !
Wait until another day !

We will leave you all alone ;
Disagreeable lazy one
Always loves to lie in bed,
Never thinks to bloom instead.

Later, when the fairies came,
She had grown a lovely flower,
Smelling sweeter every day
Getting lovelier every hour.

Chorus : Fairies hurried down the hill
And they picked the daffodil.

All her schooldays she was a sure reference for any school date needed. And when, years later, I referred to Barrie's " Little White Bird," she said " I remember the day David died." David ! The make-believe baby who was becoming a problem to his creator. She remembered the date I had read of his departure. One wonders, did she grieve for him, as she may since have grieved for the days when fantasy was more real for her than life itself ? And how and when can one wean so sensitive and imaginative a mind without unduly tampering with the personality ?

Perhaps Hilda stimulated Miss Hallam, whom we affectionately called Nurse, to train the children to be so methodical that the least practical of them could eventually become efficient. I can still hear Miss Hallam's quiet steady voice repeating the directions for stripping beds on to a chair : " Top to bottom and over again," before mattresses were rolled over to air during breakfast.

And last, the youngest (nine) and smallest, but greatest in enterprise, Dora. She had lost her sight when she was four, through scarlet fever, and had a stutter dating from the shock of the Silvertown explosion. " How lovely ! " she said on that first day



Photopress

THREE CHILDREN OF THE FIRST TERM, USING THE TAYLOR-BOARD FOR ARITHMETIC

Left to Right : Stella Howard-Jones, Mollie Hayman, Miss Phyllis Monk, Hilda Turner



WORKING IN THE LIBRARY (1934)

Left to Right : Ruth Hitchcock, Mary Bonham, Barbara Furniss

as she sniffed the sweet country air; and "Yes, I can make my own bed, but I'm n-n-not sure if I can turn the mattress alone!" Dora was the first of our children who, having become blind suddenly when very young, had turned at once to fill the gap with the greater use of other powers, and no sense of tragedy. She brought to the school a lasting inspiration in her zest for life, and her eager attack upon difficulties.

Although the Jordans setting contrasted greatly with our spacious house at The Cedars, so many of the spontaneous activities of that first term were called for again and again that the school's reputation for cherishing traditions grew with its years. But only at Jordans did our highly qualified teaching staff share so wholly in the day's programme, giving help in the little bedrooms as well as at meals, on walks and in "free-time." Similarly, Miss Juckes—with no catering and no maids to oversee—helped in the teaching. To me, the smallness of the school, planned for forty-five only when full, gave the chance I coveted, for the children to be educated by living intimately with the members of the staff, who had, I knew, so much to contribute in exchange of interests. So, I hoped, we might make one good life from two—home and school. For blind children, especially, this close contact with people and things compensated somewhat for the experience others get by seeing pictures and scenery, glancing round at advertisements, dipping into books and so on. On the other hand we were often surprised at the knowledge gained, by the blind child's greater alertness, through other senses. Discrimination of voices, footsteps, the scents of soap and polish, the sounds and feel of clothes, and the sense of space or of obstacles in a room were often astonishing. Occasionally mistakes were made, as when a blind child whose ears seldom misled her stated with confidence "There goes a tail-wagger," and her sighted companion put her right with "No, a nun with a rosary!"

Besides contributing socially at meals (conversation flourished!), members of the staff helped the children in that most difficult of all arts, the manipulation at the end of a knife and fork, of a plate of food of ever-varying quantity and consistency. That it *can* be done well, I know, but, as a rule, at the expense either of conversation or of a square meal. Although, therefore, our blind pupils practised independence in this art through their schooldays, they may well in after-school life invite or accept help in the cutting up of food if this enables them to enjoy the meal in other ways. A trivial thing to write about? Yes, and no! Just as my colleagues and I came first in 1921 to realise these little hold-ups in social intercourse, so others may take similar chances of reducing embarrassment on both sides by knowing how welcome "May I help you?" is to the blind girl, just as a direct "Will you help me?" may be to her new acquaintance. Both minds are then free to think and talk of things other than blindness, and the difficulties

resulting. Mr. Mowatt had first spoken to me of the sighted person's bewilderment when entertaining someone blind, illustrating from his own experience as a blind man at a tea-party: "Does he take sugar in his tea?" asks the hostess of the wife at his side. Again, too little a thing perhaps to cause irritation to someone always facing big odds. But the imaginative person will realise that anyone blind can take a natural place in conversation if addressed by name, when "you," with a glance in their direction, would be enough for others. In class, of course, we questioned the children by name; and when entering their room unexpectedly we learnt to make some little remark to be sure they would know who it was.

The time-table of that first term looked like that of a real school, though a small one. For the seven pupils there were three groups, A, B and C. It held all the usual subjects including French and Latin, handwork and music as well as Braille and typewriting. There was a long break during the afternoon for walks, and Wednesday afternoons were left open to good offers of special talks, demonstrations or expeditions.

During that term we grew more at home with Braille reading and writing in Grade 1 uncontracted, each word spelt in full, and Grade 2 contracted for space-saving, each letter standing also for a word, and including innumerable other signs and abbreviations.

We learnt to appreciate the Braille frame, with its hinged metal guide, used when "prodding" each dot by hand with a style, working from right to left. It was convenient in size and relatively quiet in use, but I personally remained, and still remain, faithful to the noisy but rapid Stainsby!

The Taylor board and type, for calculations in arithmetic and algebra, we found impressed visitors quite unduly, for a short acquaintance enabled one to use it for setting and correcting sums. The figures are simply made by putting pieces of metal type (with square ends ridged along one edge) in the right position in star-shaped eight-angled holes in a metal board.

With Braille and type at our finger tips (for which they were devised!) we began mildly academic studies, and learnt to adapt our methods of teaching in ways that are described in a later chapter.

Mr. Bevan quickly won the children's hearts. His musicianship had held eight hundred boys at Christ's Hospital, and now Chorleywood girls were singing with great conviction Parry's "You'll get there in the Morning." He had sweet voices in his little choir. One who was thought to have "no ear" used to slip away in "free-time" to a piano and practise singing to its notes. From 1921 onwards everyone could have individual piano lessons without extra fees, and even the least musical made the most of her chances. Music got into the school's blood that term, and is circulating still.

The physical training in the Mayflower barn was largely individual work, and remedial in character. Most blind children need special exercises to help freedom of movement and good posture;

also, sometimes, in order to get rid of movements that appear meaningless, through which, as little ones, their energies had found an outlet. "Can't I dance sitting down?" asked Hilda, when we seemed to demand too much of her! There were to be many "new girls" who found our daily exercises strenuous at first, but who became acclimatised in a week or so; and it has been this body-stretching for which so many have craved after leaving school.

Realising the happiness they gained by the communal life, and by being in close contact with what happened around them, I was confirmed in the idea that one of the constructive results of collecting such children in special schools is their sense of the fullness of life; for time can be allowed for them to take part in the daily chores and to handle objects that interest them, and they are able to treat little mishaps light-heartedly. We did not talk of blindness; I imagined they had heard too much of it from unimaginative sympathisers. They "saw" by various means—no revised vocabulary needed, as some anxious visitors had expected.

As Miss Riddell wove the tweed for tunics, she would be interrupted "to see how the loom worked," and so on. A few, including myself, were soon using little table-looms, weaving the hat-bands in madder, brown and straw-colour and taking much pride in making each a little different. Later, the developed school had views on this—"Let uniform *be* uniform"—and so ended that early ploy! Again, all could take part in suggestions and lending a hand in emergency needs. The hostel hot-water supply was insufficient, so a haybox was improvised and a reserve kept up. A call to get some goods quickly to the station brought out the wheelbarrow, and a cheerful party steered its load to Seer Green Halt.

Real work was serious this first term as it has been since, but perhaps it was the intimate and un-institutional episodes that called the tune of the "Letter to the First Term" that appeared in our first magazine in 1922.

DEAR FIRST TERM,

It would not do to tell you that you were the best, because there have been several since you, and I don't want to hurt their feelings. But you were dear, and I've called you that. Most of us were afraid of you at first. I think "afraid" is the right word. There were so many things to be thought of, you see. We knew something about schools, but I think none of us had ever begun a school before. Do you remember your First Day? When I opened the front door I thought the passage was full of people, but there could only, I think, have been a very few there. I heard somebody say "This is Dora," and I shook hands and knew that the term had begun. I can't remember much about that first night, but I remember going to bed with a queer feeling inside me that we all belonged to the future more

than to the present. Perhaps it was something to do with the room I was sleeping in. You remember its name of course: The Prophet's Chamber.

The school really started the next day. Five chairs in a row, and five that sat on them, the sun coming in at the window, a group in the background and one figure by itself in front. That was how I saw the school start. When the figure in front had done speaking, we knew that we were the school, and I don't think we've ever forgotten it.

"The Cedars, Chorleywood College." It's a good address, but none of us regret that we started at Jordans, with its pavements and pigeons and barn and little narrow passages. It is rather splendid, too, that our Ship was launched from the place where they say a weather-beaten vessel is taking her rest. It seems to assure us that "A Passage Perillous makyth a Port Pleasant."

You were partly such a dear Term because, in you, many of us did things we shall never do again. I know someone who wondered for hours why her "Stainsby" wouldn't work. She had put the carriage at the wrong end! Someone else sat on the floor for a lesson, unheard of at The Cedars. Then we got up a half-term entertainment in about two minutes, and did it. I dare say the other terms would be very majestic about this. We couldn't have done it in any term but yours.

The people who did not know you, love you just the same, and signify the fact by going to look for you at Jordans. I wonder if they have ever found you? I am not sure that you are not hiding somewhere at The Cedars.

Well, here's love to you from

EVERYONE.

Our sixth arrival (Betty), came from Ireland just in time to drive out home-sickness by friendly celebrations of her fifteenth birthday.

My date, too, had leaked out, and the first "February 6th" was kept by an entertainment, including a version of "How the Camel got his Hump"; also by little gifts made in raffia, including a table-napkin ring in school colours. So began the tradition of putting work rather than money into presents; as time went on, mats, baskets, string bags, self-Brailled anthologies, hand-thrown pots, rush-seated stools, and much else, passed from their makers to home and school friends. It was good to have evidence that this kind of effort survived when, as a parting present on my retirement, I received a stool-cum-table of excellent co-operative workmanship. For some years we scorned the sophisticated silver table-napkin ring in favour of home-made gaily coloured raffia ones, and combined efforts provided well-designed mats for the dining-room tables.

At half-term, for parents, and later for the hostel staff, other programmes were provided, including a charade showing the embarking of the Mayflower pilgrims, the "Chorleywood Scale" and Madame Too-So-So's Waxworks, in which Miss Day's and Miss Upcott's touches were evident.

It was during our stay at Jordans that the ceremony in the Mayflower barn took place, when a piece of an oak beam was presented to a group of American Quakers to place in a frontier portal which marks the hundred years' peace between Canada and the U.S.A. It was a memorable experience, and included the thrill of walking in the procession under the fire of the cinematograph camera.

Towards the end of the Jordans term came Mollie who, through a dramatic little incident, illustrated the need for parents as well as pupils to learn to read and write Braille, so that letters both ways may be private. Mollie had wanted to go to school to be like her brother, but when it came to the point became fearful of leaving her mother, who, to prevent her feeling inaccessible, planned that she could post the collar of her teddy-bear if she were unhappy. When Sunday brought letter-writing time, Miss Day, unquestioningly following Mollie's directions, put the collar in an envelope for home. The following Tuesday I was surprised at the unexpected arrival of Mollie's mother, till she explained the need to keep faith with Mollie and to settle her in. After an hour or so of frustration, Mollie's corner was turned, and she was surprised to discover how happy such a busy life had made her.

During the three months at Jordans I went over to The Cedars a number of times, generally accompanied by Miss Juckes, walking, for there were no buses that way. Our ideas about the decoration, flooring, cloak-room fittings, etc., were gradually being carried out, but the general effect was chaos, when the girls visited the house by brake, on half-term Monday, and was still chaos when members of the staff and I arrived for the Easter holidays. However, we gradually moved painters and plumbers out. Rats were dealt with by a professional. Curtains were made. Domestic staff was found. And by May 6th, when the new term began, we felt a satisfying harmony between the people, the place and its furnishings.

CHAPTER III

AT THE CEDARS

ON May 6th, 1921, we settled in at The Cedars. I quote Miss Day:—

What a delightful home it was for the school, and how we appreciated the spaciousness after the little wing at Jordans—though perhaps if the first five pupils and the staff had met first at The Cedars, we should never have “found” one another as we did in the close quarters at Jordans. From the vestibule, we walked straight into the square and spacious hall which was to be the Common Room, where no one could ever fail to know what was going on, and to find companionship. From there, we looked in on the one side, at the library which was large enough to take all our volumes for the time being, and to provide a retreat for the more scholarly; on the other, at the pleasant dining-room with its plain solid oak tables, its look and feel of good china, and its flowers. On the garden side of the house we found the beautiful room which was to be our hall for meetings, gymnastics, dances and all kinds of entertainments; with its French windows and sunny loggia, a popular resort from before breakfast till late evening. There were large airy classrooms with French windows and the sun streaming in that first summer term; outside, the unbroken oblong lawn stretched the length of the building—ideal for the games soon to be invented. There was plenty of room for the large class-room desks, and for individual lockers. We explored the long corridor, with the open door of the headmistress’s study half-way along it, and the staff common room; the handwork room with its loom, and masses of wool and raffia; and the little colony of studies and practising rooms at the end—no need to have pianos in staff or student bedrooms now! Then upstairs, to the many-windowed dormitories and cubicles, each with well-made furniture, where good craftsmanship could be felt as well as seen. We saw the pleasant sickroom bay, light and sunny, with windows back and front, the numerous bathrooms, the simply but comfortably furnished staff bed-sitting-rooms on the top floor, and nearby the exit to the roof. Back to the first floor, and past the headmistress’s sitting-room, down the handsome wide oak staircase to the common room, and through to the winter garden, where some of the more adventurous climbed the high iron stairs to examine the blossoms of the plumbago and bougainvillea.

Out in the garden we discovered the giant cedars, the lily pond with moorhens and chicks, and the nearby shrubbery.

We were always conscious of the wild life outside—and indeed inside, for in the library a robin would perch on the back of one’s chair and sing!—it was perhaps the same robin which so often flew in, and sampled the cakes first at staff room tea. The water wagtails from the lawn would come right up to the classroom French windows, uttering their “juicy” note; the green woodpecker collected ants on the far side of the lawn, and could be heard at intervals all day yaffling round the house, while the cuckoo’s call was so persistent at times as to be considered a serious interruption by some of the more studious! Later, a cuckoo reared by a pair of water wagtails remained in the winter garden until fully fledged. Rooks cawed from the shrubbery, and grey squirrels jumped up and down the trees near the studies, whence it was possible on occasion to watch one burying its chestnuts in the grass underneath.

How good it was to be able to cross the rustic bridge over the ha-ha, and to walk past the hollow tree with the owl's nest, through the park, and, in those early days, if we wished, straight along the mile-and-a-half drive, not yet turned into a public road, to Rickmansworth.

On the other side of the house lay the common which we grew to love more and more, with its pleasant scents of wild rose, bracken and gorse, its blackberries, and its by no means easy paths. Nearby was the church, the post office and the village store, soon to become a popular resort.

The actual appearance of the school at The Cedars, after such a long period of grand scale preparation must have been something of an anti-climax in the neighbourhood—a handful of pupils for this spacious “French château,” in outfit by no means chic but home-spun. But we felt a quiet friendliness around us as well from those for whom our hall had been their ballroom, as from those who had been family retainers. Perhaps our first local friends, the four Misses Barnes of Solesbridge Lane, led the way. They chatted with the children, showed them their hens, ducks and horses and were, I think, responsible for the presentation of the brush when a fox was hunted down in our grounds. I believe they would even have understood had I then confessed that the brush was quietly hidden in the basement in deference to our feelings for the fox!

Mr. George Stacey, who had grown up on the place (garden-boy at 13, footman at 22), was to us a kind of bailiff-head-gardener and guide. He loved the place, the family mansion and the splendid trees, and talked too of the luscious fruit of the winter garden and hot-house. He was a power in the neighbourhood also, on the Urban District Council, and in the choir of the parish church. It was he who had shown us round on our first visits to The Cedars, and who supplied the hurricane lamp for our walk back to Jordans that night when pitch-blackness overtook Miss Juckes and me.

The children also made friends with the gardeners and the estate carpenter, for whom Mr. Batty took responsibility.

Our own handyman-boilerman-engineer, Arthur Craft, was ready with his services at all times. We met this spirit again and again in those who served our handicapped pupils—with no Trade Union hours or other limits to their response, when blindness wanted a fillip on its adventurous way.

In 1921 we were blessed by the friendly, though deferential, atmosphere of those living on the estate: there were the two gardeners' families with Mrs. Jo Craft, at the lodge guarding the gate to the Rickmansworth Road, greeting us with a bobbing curtsy, and Mrs. Jo Collier, by the gate to the common, radiating goodwill, being content with her lot; while the Duces, who lived over the stable, contributed the cheerful sound of horse and waggonette, click-clopping down the drive on its way to take the blind babies of Sunshine House (half a mile away) for an airing.

Our first little party that summer was for the almshouse ladies as well as for the wives of the gardeners, the maids and other helpers,

to let them see for themselves that the home of the Gilliats, whom they had served, was still beautiful, although adapted for school life.

Just as I must now refrain from introducing individually the new pupils and new mistresses as they came, term by term, except in-so-far as they introduce some new issue, so the domestic staff must be brought into the picture as from a distant focus, though I would like to have had "close-ups" of some amongst those who meant much to us: Miriam-and-Mabel (friends) and Emily, whose dignity raised the children's as they called them "Miss" . . . ; Connie, with stern exterior and a melting, loyal heart; Mrs. Y., so laboured by her weight, the friend of the midnight feast; and Gertie, who was never bustled, and had time for endless kindnesses as she fulfilled her work.

In those first years, before buses came our way or cinemas for entertainment, we had social evenings and classes with the maids, including, at different periods, country dancing, sewing, and Bible study. Later on there were occasional parties only, in which the pupils took a more active part as hostesses; and at the time when three of us had cars, we drove the domestic staff to Burnham Beeches and other good spots for picnics, while volunteer pupils acted as their substitutes at school, washing up, etc. We moved with the times, too, in supplying attractive uniform; and, later, wages became worthy of their service, as recommended in the Hetherington Report; £45 was the highest rate in 1921, whereas about £150 became normal in the early forties. I was rather sorry that our domestic staff of that time did not want to be pioneers in raising the dignity of their calling by being addressed as "Miss" . . . but no! And they showed they were content with their conditions, even in war-time, by bringing other stalwarts from Scotland to join our household. During the war years there was much co-operation in getting essentials done, the pupils cleaning their class rooms and dormitories and providing squads for washing up, and maids and senior pupils were all guests at the dances organised by our N.I.B. evacuees.

The summer of 1921 will long be remembered for its phenomenally long period of sunny heat. Our house and the garden under the shade of the cedars were gratefully cool, and at night members of the staff slept on the flat roof. The ground was too dry for the girls to remove the turf from the piece of field chosen for their garden, so, with Miss Riddell's guidance, they planned it (four beds and intersecting grass paths) for working on in the autumn, and sowed perennials in boxes. It took three terms to dig, manure and stock three of the beds, by which time those who worked in them were having weekly bunches of lupins, sweet Williams and marigolds. We must admit that co-operative gardening by a group of blind girls adds difficulties which are not felt when each starts her own plot from scratch, and has no interference with her own efforts.

But both group and individual gardening brought pleasure in different ways, and the consultations and plannings with experienced gardeners were of real social value. The distinguishing by touch of weeds from choice plants can only be gained by experience and a step backwards may be fatal to a precious tulip! But gardening was enjoyed by the majority, and more and more beds were developed as time went on.

The children's gardening remained in the charge of a physical training specialist throughout my twenty-four years at the school, for Miss V. C. Turner succeeded Miss Riddell in her love of flowers and also excelled in their decorative arrangement, and we were fortunate in finding that Miss McConnell, when she came in 1935, had similar artistry in handling flowers and in crafts work. Was it coincidence, or their sensitiveness to beauty in form, that influenced their choice of a career, leading all three to become specialists in developing the human body?

As the school grew in age-range and in numbers, the Junior form mistress helped her little ones in their garden plots, and in 1929 we first accepted the offer of a weekly class for senior girls by an experienced lady-gardener appointed by the Guild for Blind Gardeners to encourage this hobby. This senior class worked chiefly on beds formed outside the wall of the "Big Garden" and gained experience in growing fruit and vegetables as well as flowers. Of those who visited us weekly to take this class, we especially welcomed Miss D. Fountain (now Mrs. Fromow) for she also gave time and interest to the school as a whole.

As Chorleywood College (for this was the name now officially chosen) has long enjoyed swimming, it may be wondered if that, too, began in the hot summer of 1921. No. We looked longingly at the pool in the kitchen-garden, but the bees were in possession. We called it the bathing pool, and later had some good dips, but it was too shallow for actual swimming. By 1923 it needed clearing, and a school squad had a great time emptying and cleaning it out, and looked forward triumphantly to hot weather and a dip. But by that time it was considered unsuitable, and real swimming became possible only by expeditions to the open air bath at Rickmansworth. From 1923 to 1935 this off-shoot of the canal served us well in experiences that, in those days, seemed quite adventurous. We tried all sorts of ways of covering the two-and-a-half miles each way, sometimes walking, occasionally going partly by train, more often by any kind of lorry we could charter, and sometimes running relay lifts with our several private cars, until there were public buses to serve our needs. The expeditions were very popular with the girls and proved the valour of the staff, for all who could went with them and waded about in the cold water, helping would-be swimmers and giving turns off the bar to the little ones, to whom even the shallow end, with its slippery bottom, felt unsafe for free enterprise. Progress in swimming?

Fair to moderate ! For real success we must look on to 1935 and beyond, when our own pool made all things possible, and time and energy could be spent on the art itself instead of on the accessories.

The first summer of 1921 saw the beginning of poultry keeping, which has always had a place of great importance in the minds of its devotees. Miss Ruddell was then in charge, with seventeen birds (Wyandottes, Buffs and Leghorns) with names to character, a few girls to share the work, and a number of others hoping their turn would soon come.

Poultry-work under Miss Pope's direction, from autumn 1923, was an important part of school life. She was trained and experienced and now made it an alluring ploy for her pupils ; there were so many volunteers that they worked in shifts to make the work go round. Not only did it involve feeding, watering, egg-collecting, cleaning of houses, but the keeping of records and accounts, and of course the hatching of chicks, under hens and in incubators. Occasionally " Wednesday times " too were given up to discussions, readings, or lectures on poultry. It has been a marvellous outlet, and helped to turn many corners for blind and sighted chickeners alike ; an all weather job that appealed to most, to a few not at all. It was Elaine (with no sight) who would, in the dark, steer her sighted companion past the biggest puddles, sensing them by the sound—an echo ?—when she clicked her fingers. It was at her pre-school interview (age six) that she had run unhesitatingly along the corridor, and we, the staff, first realised the independence possible when hearing and the pressure sense are so acute.

Playing in the hay, with rides in the hay-cart, singing " Sing Hey, Sing Hey, it is market day," is another good memory of the first summer ; so also a half-term drive in a two-horse brake to visit Jordans. Was that the time we commented on the brake's slow pace and the driver replied, " They're funeral horses ! "

The first fancy dress dance took place that term, as a farewell party to Miss Juckes, shortly to become Mrs. Douglas. Later a fancy dress dance was held annually near Christmas time, until in 1937 its character changed to a party with games instead of dancing, a Christmas tree with coloured lights, laden with gifts, many made by the children, and ending with carols by firelight.

" The Dance," written in the style of " Hiawatha," was part of a contribution to a later magazine, by our first bard, Hilda :—

Never ran the hare more swiftly,
Never tripped the fawn more lightly
In the chase with hounds pursuing
O'er the mountain and the meadows,
O'er the forests and the prairies,
Than the many staff and pupils,

Of that wondrous seat of learning,
Of that mystic place of knowledge,
Danced their annual dance, in token
That the Autumn Term was ending,
And that Christmas time was coming.

First they marched around in couples,
Singing songs of ancient ages,
Written chiefly when the College
To its present size was growing ;
Members of the staff had made them,
One the words and one the music.
Then they danced the waltz and foxtrot,
While the fiddler and the pianist
And the College band were playing ;
Beating drums and clanging cymbals
Till the gong was rung for supper.

Then the dining room they entered,
Stood awhile with hands held crosswise ;
“ Auld Lang Syne ” together sang they,
As a token of their friendship
Then, and in the time hereafter.

CHAPTER IV

A CRISIS—AND FRIENDS MADE DURING IT

I HAVE written, so far, chiefly of the inside life of the new school, with some glimpses ahead, but with little reference to those supporting it as one of many claims upon their time, interests, and responsibilities. The N.I.B. Council, and in particular the Standing Committee, then dealt with Chorleywood College business as part of a long agenda, and I was present at that part. At such times appointments on the teaching and matron staffs were confirmed. The school has always profited by the realisation of this Committee (and later of its Governors) that "good fits" are most likely when candidates for a post meet the headmistress at the school, and the vacancy is offered to one whose approach to the life as a whole supplements good professional qualifications.

The school's health was also well guarded. Dr. Venning, of Rickmansworth, partner of Dr. Cardew, became, and has remained, the School Medical Officer. As the appointment was on a capitation-fee basis, we were able to consult him freely before trouble became serious, and he came frequently when need be. His willingness to talk over health problems and their treatment was a god-send to the Matron and me, and so indirectly to parents, to whom frequent bulletins were sent in times of illness.

Mr. N. Bishop Harman was for twenty years our visiting ophthalmologist, and came regularly to see each pupil, and advise us as to any special care needed. He was famous for his concern for the myopic child, recommending short periods, well spaced, for reading and writing; but this was not applicable at Chorleywood, where all used Braille.

It is not out of place, although out of time order, to tell also of Mr. Maurice Whiting, who became our eye specialist in 1941. He gave advice (for some a reasonable use of print), prescribed glasses, treatment by operation and otherwise, and showed such friendly interest in each individual's present and future that there was disappointment when it was not "my turn to see him." He came several times a term, as the school had grown; and the consultations were human, with no feeling of "just routine." He interpreted his appointment generously, and has his reward, not in fees but in further claims upon his time, accumulating past Chorleywoodians too among his patients!

Periodic orthopaedic consultations were instituted in 1942, when Miss Kirby of the Red Cross decided who should see Mr. Higgs, a leading orthopaedic specialist, at the Watford Clinic.

Mr. Charles, of Rickmansworth, dealt with necessary dentistry. Who better than he could bring back confidence to a child whom illness had un-nerved for the dentist's chair? In 1927 he started

his end-of-term inspections, to advise the parents when treatment in the holidays was needed.

The N.I.B. dealt with big-scale expenditure, such as rates, taxes, insurance ; and our household accounts were regularly submitted to their accountants. The atmosphere was co-operative and friendly, so when a warning note sounded about the expense of running the school at The Cedars, I realised that times were serious. During visits from Lady Pearson, Sir Arthur Pearson himself and his cousin Miss E. Maxwell-Lyte, who acted temporarily as honorary organising secretary, we realised that financial difficulties were uppermost in their minds. Alternative courses—either of letting the College slip quietly away, or of advertising it more vigorously to bring greater numbers and financial support—were being weighed in the balance. There was a short spate of publicity. In September, 1921, the Press were invited to a "private view" of The Cedars. The leading daily papers were nearly all represented and there were follow-ups by them, photographers and writers of "stories," some with pre-conceived and wrong ideas ("Marvellous how blind children can tell the colour of the hens by touch!"), some with the dignity of truth. I remember, later on, another photographer, as he stood in the doorway of our long corridor with his camera safely behind him, exclaiming, as a blind girl swung, singing, past: "How I wish I could take *that*!"

Not long before Sir Arthur Pearson's sudden death in the December of 1921, the possible need to close The Cedars was brought openly to the Committee, with Sir Arthur in the Chair. I am glad to remember that at the end of the meeting, when I had somewhat dramatically assured him that we should carry on in a cottage if not in a mansion, he gave me a hand-grip that meant his heart was with us.

For a further few months, the school itself was unaware of the impending crisis. Pupils, now including two adult students and a child of six, numbered eighteen, and came from all parts of the British Isles. In my report (July, 1922) I said:—

Of the work of the school I can at present only say that there has been plenty of it, and that it has been undertaken with a keenness that has made the artificial stimulus of marks and prizes as unnecessary as have been any formal punishments. Saturday afternoon has been a holiday; Wednesday has been a variable day, programmes including lectures, cooking, debates, etc., which, although of educational value, could find no place in the formal time-table. Enterprise and energy is abounding, and has found scope in getting up impromptu entertainments, sharp-practice debates, "Parliaments" for discussing school problems, the making of a new garden from a piece of parkland, the production of a school magazine, and the evolution of two outdoor games quite new in the sporting world, one for winter, one for summer.

The report also referred to entertainments and expeditions and to At Homes (one to friends interested in education) and continued:

This term we held a garden party with the double object of increasing interest and funds, and, besides enjoying a splendid concert,

given by artists introduced by Mr. A. E. Bevan, as well as by the school, we succeeded in clearing about £54. The original object had been to raise a fund towards the purchase of a grand piano, but a generous gift of a Collard & Collard has set part of this sum free for other educational luxuries. We have also gratefully to acknowledge the gifts of a splendid set of Jazz-band and other musical instruments, a gramophone and some records, an Encyclopædia Britannica, a pogo stick and a dolls' house.

Then details about the domestic financial balance were given, proposals for some reduction of staff, more fees through more pupils and the prospect of some return through the charge for making some of the school uniform. Visits and letters from Mr. Mowatt helped me to feel the pulse of N.I.B. finances, and its possible reaction as regards our future. Schemes to raise an endowment fund by appeals to high society had proved abortive; the magic of Sir Arthur Pearson's appeal was lost; the public seemed confused between St. Dunstan's for blind ex-service men and the National Institute for the Blind, for the far greater number of civilian blind. The country itself was going through a financial crisis that hit charitable organisations particularly hard—while here, at The Cedars, was Chorleywood College, with a legacy of vast sums spent on its remodelling, and high maintenance expenses, claiming support. Mr. Mowatt's hope of saving The Cedars became very low.

With the help of Mr. Stainsby, as Secretary-General of the N.I.B., and of Mr. Bailey, as its chief accountant, I studied the figures and, in a long letter to the N.I.B. Committee, made detailed proposals about ways of reducing costs and increasing income, partly by raising the fees to £150 and also by raising a separate and special fund for the maintenance of the College. I also asked for "the coming school year to be regarded as a trial year." I heard again from Mr. Mowatt that if anyone could save The Cedars it would be Captain Towse, V.C., who had undertaken to be at the meeting when the decision would be made. Captain Towse supported the trial year plan and undertook to be responsible for it.

The position was made clear to the parents in the following letter:—

THE CEDARS,
CHORLEYWOOD, HERTS.

DEAR ———

I am sending this letter with the account of the term's fees, etc., to explain to you the difficulties with which the College is at present faced, and thereby, I am certain, ensuring your co-operation in meeting and overcoming them.

The College is, as you know, dependent upon the National Institute for the Blind, not only for the house and grounds, but for the further financial support necessary towards its maintenance, for which the fees are quite inadequate.

Not only has the great cost of remodelling the house, in making it so admirably fitted for its special purpose, made a heavy claim upon the N.I.B. resources; but there is a large deficit on its working, also to be met by the Institute's funds.

The N.I.B., like all other organisations dependent upon voluntary contributions, is during the present financial depression finding its income considerably reduced and the claim upon it by the necessitous blind correspondingly increased. The Council has therefore had seriously to consider whether, under these circumstances, they are justified in continuing their support of a College for girls who come from homes in a position to make education a first claim.

You do not need convincing of the unique and necessary place the College is filling; the fact that it has grown in less than two years, with a minimum of advertisement, from five to twenty-five, speaks for itself, and the children and you parents have, in your different ways, made the staff and myself so certain of the worth of its work that it is only a matter of *how* and not *whether* we can depend upon its continuity.

The Council has decided to leave the College at The Cedars until July next, and to review the position again not later than March 1923, by which time it is urgent that the financial position should be so much improved that we may reasonably hope to count upon our present as our permanent quarters.

The fees must be raised from £105 (£35 a term) to £150 (£50 a term) and extra medical fees charged, £1 ls. a term to include all ordinary medical attendance and the terminal inspection by an eye-specialist.

I am aware that there are a few cases where it is quite impossible for these increased fees to be paid, but we rely upon every effort being made to meet them to the full during this critical period of the College's career.

Pupils will be retained and considered for admission at the present fees in those cases where the Committee is satisfied that by no means can the higher fees be raised.

These higher fees still compare favourably from the parents' point of view with those of other boarding schools of the same standing, and that they will still leave a deficit to be met by other efforts is accounted for by the facts:—

(1) That the College is not endowed, as in the case of most of the great public schools.

(2) That the number of pupils will always be small, and especially so during these early years, although all stages from the Kindergarten to students of University standing are already represented and so the essential classification requires a relatively large staff.

(3) That more individual teaching and general training is required than in a school for fully sighted girls.

(4) That the education equipment is very expensive.

I earnestly hope, therefore, that you will accept the position I have placed before you sympathetically, and that you will endeavour to express in practical form, if possible, your confidence of the worth of the College by paying voluntarily for this term, the higher fees that will become due next.

I hope to see you at half-term.

Meanwhile, believe me,

Yours sincerely,

PHYLLIS MONK.

It brought good response.

Captain Towse (soon to be knighted), had won his V.C. and lost his sight in the South African War. There is a great deal more I should like to say about him, but here and now it must suffice to illustrate the confidence he inspired by the result of his appeal to save the school. A balance sheet for the year 1923-1924, together

with a list of donations and subscriptions, shows Their Majesties, King George and Queen Mary heading the list ; donations from City Companies, and also from a number of girls' schools, in response to the appeal sent through the headmistresses to head girls in public schools. There were individual donors too, and a special scholarship from Sir Alexander Muddiman, C.S.I., C.I.E. The grand total was £1,174, and, in addition, annual scholarships were granted by Gardner's Trust for the Blind, The United Services Fund, and The Braille and Servers of the Blind League. The balance sheet also shows the first fruits of our own efforts in raising a Special Equipment and Exhibition Fund.

In the spring of 1923 we heard the decision of the N.I.B. Council : they had decided to support the College at The Cedars. The tension was over, but the need to economise and to do all possible to help ourselves remained. Actually the efforts added a zest to life. Within four years from December, 1922, the school by its own enterprises cleared £966 for the Exhibition and Equipment Fund. Part was spent on equipment (the most expensive being the pottery kiln), but most of it was invested to help out fee shortages. We first organised a private subscription dance after term, clearing £30, but most of the fund was raised through three two-day bazaars, with accompanying donations. The description in our magazine of the first, in February, 1923, will give an impression of the way we made money, and discovered innumerable friends at the same time :

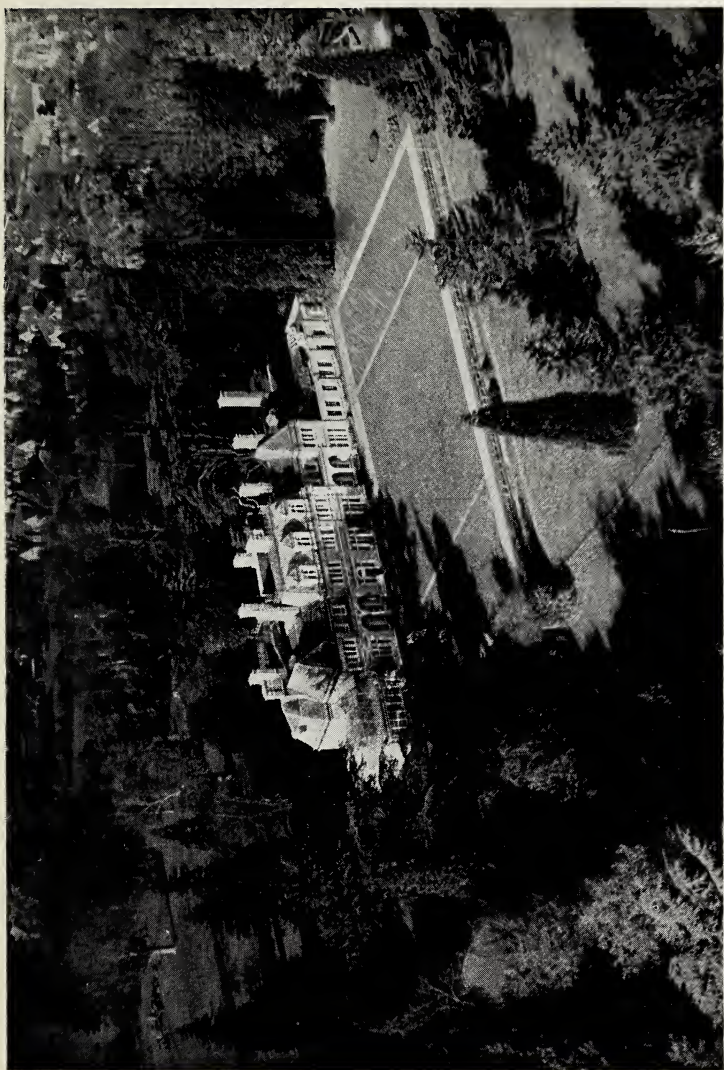
It is difficult to say when the bazaar began, for the idea that crystallised in February began with the conviction that the College could and would add to the funds so necessary for its existence.

Parents and friends threw in their lot with the College, and so many and such generous contributions came by post, motor, train and in the January trunks that fearfulness was removed from our ambition to make it a two-day bazaar.

The school's work in raffia, pottery, etc., grew steadily. Work parties were organised, at which someone read, and often in the evenings, when official work hours were over, members of the staff were pricing and sorting the gifts that swamped the spare-room, while in odd corners downstairs gaily-coloured baskets, bags, and mats grew apace, some attractive jazz-work arising from raffia collected from the floor !

Normal work was carried on until the day before the event, but abnormal work was added to it. One little group would be told off to make fortune rhymes, another to quibble a museum catalogue into being, others to carry a garden-bed under cover that it might become the hiding-place of gold and other treasure, and some to make badges for stall-holders. An island was built surrounded by sea-foam of sheep's wool, and bristling with treasures that could be won by the adventurous, strewn among the seaweed, refreshing in its pungency. Hoop-la with its prize-table was set up, and a bran tub filled, while fortunes were divided between a ruffle for our retriever Ben and the petticoat of a gypsy doll.

On this, the "day before," dining-room tables and class-room desks became stalls, and a long picnic began. Some local friends of the College came to decorate the stalls of which they had undertaken to take charge, bringing splendid contributions.



CHORLEYWOOD COLLEGE



"DIPPING" IN THE LILY POOL (1936)

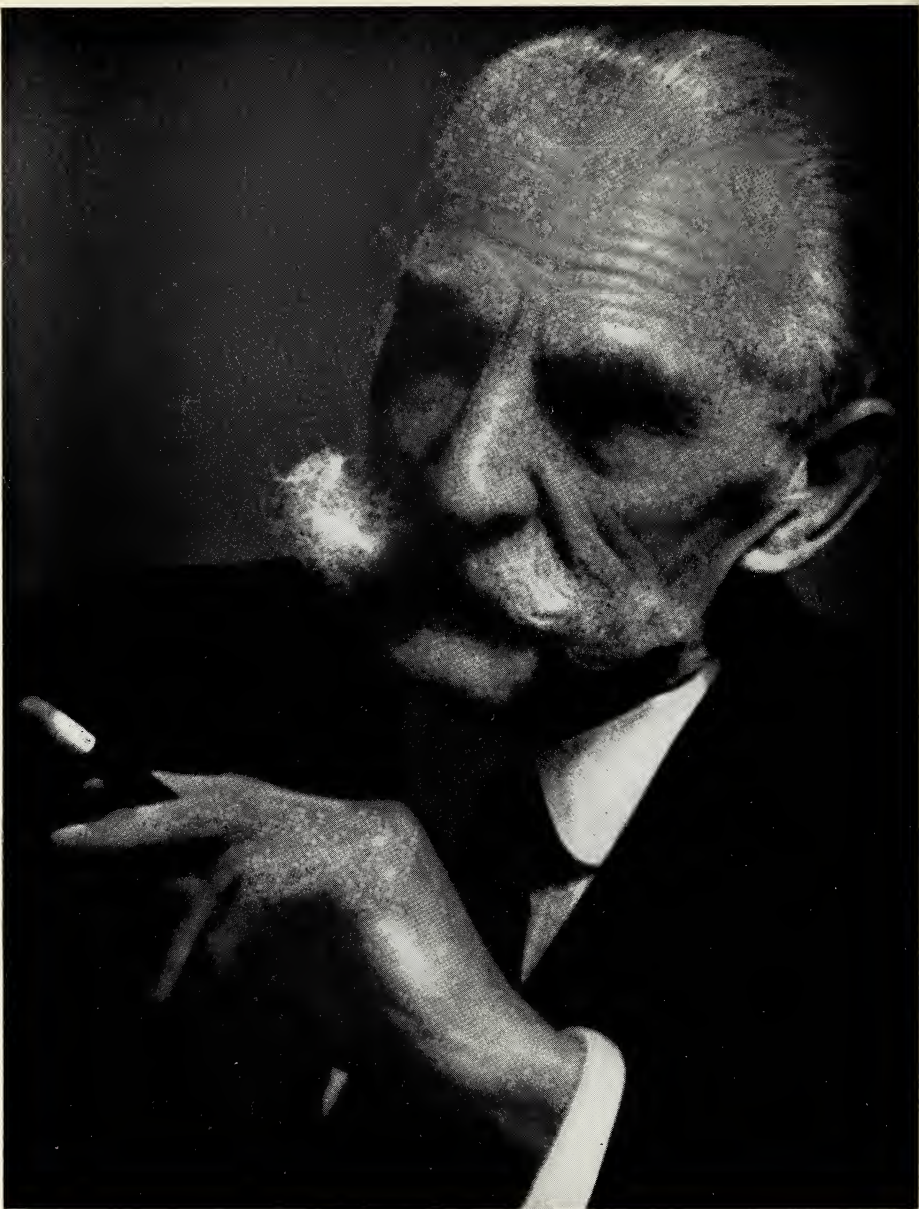
Standing : Audrey Walmsley

Left to Right : Heather Carter, Jean Hazelwood, Anne Burrows



" CHICKENERS " (1936)

*Standing Left to Right : Betty Moreton, Nina Barrett
In Front : Jean Squires*



CAPTAIN SIR BEACHCROFT TOWSE, V.C., K.C.V.O., C.B.E.

Fayer

Before the last Good nights were said, the school handwork stall was justifying its central position ; needlework of all kinds was in profusion at its side ; the library held toys and art both lavish and unique, as well as a provisions and sweet stall, soon to become laden with good things, and every one knew her own part in the next day's programme.

The morning was fine, so the school proper took the air, while finishing touches, including the erection of a stall for flowers, fruit and vegetables, the fixing of directing labels and rhymed instructions, went on until the opening ceremony.

It was somewhat after the scheduled time, and a good company had purse in hand, when it was discovered that the Countess of Clarendon had slipped in unnoticed and was awaiting her summons.

From a primitive platform she was introduced by Captain Towse, and the College felt that the kind and warm support expressed by both would help them through more critical times than a bazaar.

The Countess was asked to extend her interest back to the beginning of the College by accepting a copy of the first magazine from the hands of a student member of its Editorial Board, and from a six-year-old schoolgirl a bowl of hyacinths, the bowl school-thrown, and the bulbs home-grown.

The purchasing was brisk, until many were called off to spend their money in another way, advertised by a fantastic " sandwich-man," whose bell and posters urged visitors to hasten to the concert. Later, dancing and acting claimed an audience, and between these programmes the College was busy officiating at the various side-shows and school-stall—the latter serving also as an inquiry bureau. The sale of gay and capacious bags made the parcel office slack, but some visitors were attracted there as the headquarters of an exhibition of school apparatus. Only a few found time to enjoy the ease of the rest-room provided. Tea went on as busily as things elsewhere, until the time came when our visitors had left, and stall-holders and staff turned to count their shekels.

The next day opened relatively lightly as regards the work of preparation, but heavily as regards the weather, so that at the entrance was posted an additional rhyme :

We beg all visitors to greet ;

And—on this mat to wipe their feet !

Admiral Smith-Dorrien opened and Captain Towse followed him in recommending the bazaar to our visitors' support. Those who came stayed longer than on the previous day, so that when at the end the result of the raffles, competitions, and hidden treasure were announced, there was loud applause as one familiar name after another was read out . . . Then came help from the bank to count and keep our takings, the packing of surplus goods into trunks, and—welcome bed.

But the fact that by the morrow's breakfast time unbidden hands had made all the rooms habitable, is typical of the spirit in which the whole College—staff, girls, and maids—shouldered this happy burden.

Since then, the surplus goods have been transferred to shelves in one wine cellar, where shop opens once a fortnight, and in the next cellar is the pottery kiln towards which the proceeds of the school stall contributed.

It was soon possible to announce the profits as £250, and since then, through subsidiary sales, the figure has reached £287. This was all added to the Special Equipment and Exhibition Fund, which mounted to over £400 during the school year. Of this £350 has been invested as the nucleus for exhibitions—the school's greatest need.

So the College's reward was far greater than was dreamt of, and in ways immeasurable, a feeling of warm support from within and without, and of a growing recognition of the place it has come to fill.

During this period of "life-saving," the school had won its way into the hearts of many friends, outstandingly into that of Sir Beachcroft Towse, whom we rather felt "belonged" to us as we had, in a sense, belonged to him during that trial year. He took pride in the fact that "Chorleywood girls speak up for themselves . . ." and he, with his secretary, Miss Hale, was always available at times good and bad. He became Chairman of the school's first Governing Body in 1929. Lady Towse, too, also interested her friends in the school; and local people, some of whom first knew us through individual pupils, followed up help at the bazaar by friendly services, and never in a patronising way. Perhaps this barrier was avoided because, as was written of me, "There is a bold absence of ceremony in her formalities on 'special days.' The visitor who comes as a friend is at home; he who expects punctuated applause and a red carpet to his approach (we speak metaphorically) is probably uneasy . . ."

Miss Barnes was the first to teach us bird songs; Lady Maude Dawson (violin) and Mrs. Cooper (singing) gave us concerts; Sir Henry Wood, then living at Cherrytree Farm next door, gave advice ("The better the music the less the money in it!"), and gave a pupil from South Africa an introduction to the B.B.C. which led to her singing native folk songs and bird-calls in the Children's Hour. Mr. Armstrong presented us with gramophone records (good ones!), Mrs. Cedar Paul gave recitals of folk songs and tales; Jean Sterling Mackinlay, with her brother and her husband (Harcourt Williams), songs and stories and opportunities to see (by touch) her gay and charming costumes; Miss Penelope Lawrence, retired headmistress of Roedean, gave us some of her inimitable recitations; she had seen our very beginnings when workmen were in charge, and lived again her own day-dreams that came true on the Sussex Downs; Mrs. Merrick and her Danish visitor, who knew no English, first showed us the value of Esperanto (for we found we could guess much of the interpreting) and so led to the first of a series of voluntary Esperanto classes, myself the leader starting from scratch with the rest.

It was a neighbour, Captain Blake, who in the summer of 1924 demonstrated wireless, fixing aërials to a cedar and placing a loud speaker in the centre of the hall. Who else remembers the thrill of hearing (none too easily!) East-end children's voices, as one by one we put an ear to the horn? This was soon followed by the setting up of a gift of a three-valve set by another neighbour, Mr. Barringer, in co-operation with Mr. Raymond Hawker; and this, as broadcasting developed, was succeeded in 1927 by a new set, with extensions, from a friend of Mr. Mowatt's.

Later on, the N.I.B. saw that we were well supplied in that respect, too, for wireless had become an educational as well as a social resource.

In 1923 we made another friend in Sir Alexander Muddiman, who from that time visited us on every leave until his sudden death, when Governor of the United Provinces, in June, 1927. He had read, in India, an appeal on behalf of the school and his interest was roused for various reasons, including the need for constructive help for the great numbers of blind people in that country. Not only did he give us two scholarships, but became a personal friend to the children, partly by his talks on the animals and cities of India, on its government and religions, and on "how to behave when you're knighted!"; also, by escaping into the little ones' room and playing at being elephants with them. In one heartening letter he wrote: "I always come away after seeing you all with a better opinion of the world, and much cheered." I wonder if his hope that a Parsee girl might become a student at Chorleywood and return to help develop higher education in her own country may yet come to pass?

Mr. and Mrs. Chappell also became our friends in the period of which I am writing, and gave generously of their time and interest until they left the neighbourhood in 1934. It started with informal entertainments, when, with their bulldog Grock, they came round at week-ends; and ended by Mrs. Chappell's running, with technical knowledge and skill, the older girls' Choral and Dramatic Society. They often welcomed individual members of the staff to their charming house and garden. Indeed we missed them sorely when they left for Somerset.

During this period the school also had splendid gifts from donors we did not know personally—the Aeolean Orchestrelle and electric playing piano, both with a liberal supply of rolls, and an auto-harp, which made a good picture when the right singer played it!

Amongst Chorleywood's early and lasting friends was Queen Mary's High School at Walsall. It was one amongst many schools to respond generously to Captain Sir Beachcroft Towse's appeal at our most critical time, and it went on supporting our Exhibition and Equipment Fund, to the tune of £5 a term, until 1939, when we agreed that the "Save the Children Fund" had a greater claim, and our school joined Queen Mary's in contributing to it.

One of our experiments was, I believe, unique, and brought us friends distant in mileage and opportunity—some long-term women prisoners at Liverpool. They wanted more to do in their "free-time" and they were not allowed to compete with paid labour. With the co-operation of Miss Margery Fry, the prison authorities and Miss Day, it was arranged that the need of our younger children for more books in uncontracted Braille should be explained to them, and volunteers invited to learn Braille Grade I for the purpose of

transcribing suitable stories. Volunteers were forthcoming ; Miss Dart—who had recently given us a lecture-recital—undertook to teach them ; Braille apparatus and the printed story-books were lent, and, in due course, a number of very welcome Braille volumes were added to our shelves.

The subject of Braille leads me back to education, and to say that the varied activities already referred to—centring round the bazaars and our many friends—were, I believe, as educative as any book-learning, in the experience they brought to children whose opportunities tended to be limited by their own handicap and the bustle of the "sighted" world. I suppose I may have seemed a hard task-master ; at any rate, I expected lesson-hours and preparation to keep their appointed times, and steady work to be done in them, so all these other enterprises found un-timetabled hours.

This chapter in the school's history—the crisis, with the efforts and friendships it stimulated—brought the school song *Our Ship* into being. Miss Upcott's heart was in it for she knew of the troubled waters, but had faith beyond ; and Mr. Bevan's music was in it. No wonder it has been sung with conviction at special times ever since its début in November, 1923 :—

The wind in the rigging,
A clamorous salt sea,
Fair or dirty weather,
It matters not to me,
For I'm afloat
In a seagoing boat,
And she won't go down,
Not she ! Not she !
And she won't go down,
Not she !

Though skies be overcast,
And land be out of sight,
The company I've shipped with
Is navigating right,
As seamen do
When the needle's true,
And the racing sea
Foams white ! Foams white !
And the racing sea
Foams white !

Once aboard The Cedars,
You're never going back,
The wind is blowing forward,
An awkward wind to tack,
You've swung your cot
With a pioneer lot,
You'll very soon get
The knack ! The knack !
You'll very soon get
The knack !

Voyaging ! Voyaging !
It's not a pleasure trip,
Passengers not wanted,
But if you'll take a tip,
You'll join the crew
And steer her through,
Here's to all aboard
Our ship ! Our ship !
Here's to all aboard
Our ship !

A good song for all times, and outstandingly our own, for what Chorleywoodian has not felt that "wind blowing forward," when launching into the "sighted" world, with the need of the courage of a pioneer ?

CHAPTER V

GROWTH

WORK—lesson work—moved on. The stimulus of numbers (thirty-four by the summer of 1928), including some girls with particularly keen and able brains, led to an expanding curriculum, as small groups and individuals had different needs.

Within three years of our beginning, several personalities had brought us much food for thought and feeling. In 1922 an experienced teacher, Miss Tyrrell, came as a student, to adapt herself to threatened blindness. At her own request she took classes in mathematics and thrived on this rather than on Braille, helping us much.

Janet Park came then too, nearly twenty-one, having left school in Scotland early to live a grown-up life. She returned, with badly deteriorating sight, to start again through Braille. In Janet, courage triumphed every time. She lived the school life loyally, co-operatively: taking once again ordinary school subjects for which she had no great enthusiasm, and with an open mind as to what might follow. She awoke, early in her second term, to find that she was blind. Her getting-about sight had gone in a night. She said she would carry on; "The others can do it, so will I"—and wanted to be left to go about the school by herself. Over this she yielded to persuasion for, in blindness, one cannot learn to go right by going wrong; the best way must be studied, practised with help, and then independence follows. How her career took shape is told elsewhere. No other pupil has lost her sight while at Chorleywood; residual vision has generally been strengthened by healthy conditions, or at least made more useful by applying general intelligence.

In the following year Alice Cunningham came for the short time before she became a student at St. Hugh's College, Oxford, in the autumn of 1924. She came from South Africa, with hopes of returning to help develop higher education for blind people there. Meanwhile she became Janet's friend, and together they explored outlets for enterprise, including the shrubberies whose elusive paths actually let *in* better than *out*, as other explorers have also discovered! By returning to study at Chorleywood during various vacations, she won the confidence of others too, who needed especial understanding.

Muriel Collis in 1921, at the age of seventeen when she lost her sight, brought her High School experience with her to Chorleywood College. It was watching her joy in running—with Miss Riddell—that sowed the seed that became Sport-X. Her blindness heralded serious general illness, from which she died at her home in 1927. You can meet her in her romance "The Nymph of the Lily Pool," and in verses in early magazines. "The Water Lily's Song" was one of her contributions:—

Here on the waters calm
 Sheltered from every harm,
 Where all seems full of charm,
 I live and die ;
 Laughing the hours away,
 Living from day to day,
 Ere with a sigh I say
 My last goodbye.

Nymphs in their ecstasy
 Sing songs of joy to me,
 As they splash merrily
 In waters cool.
 Bright coloured butterflies,
 Like fairies in disguise,
 Hover and flit and rise
 Over the pool.

Oh, the hours fly so fast !
 Summer will soon be past,
 Winter be here at last,
 Then spring come anew.
 Never did heart incline
 To happier life than mine,
 Floating all summer time
 Here, as I do.

In 1923 Elizabeth from the north country and Freye from Alderney were new girls together, both about seventeen, and ready for all we could give them in thorough hard work. Elizabeth, who lost her sight when four years old, had decided to forego the security of the training in machine knitting, and to take the opportunities offered by Chorleywood College. We learnt much from her. She was so capable with head and hands, and we were amazed to see her making, unaided, a charming frock for a baby, having first devised a paper pattern from which to cut the material. Both she and Freye came, hungry for scholarly work, feeling ignorant, but with an ability and keenness that had not yet had any real outlet. Their progress was heartening to the staff too. And how they revelled in Miss Chettle's academic brain !

In 1924 arrived, at age twelve, another scholar-in-embryo, Hazel. Her great vitality embraced all the school offered in work and other enterprises, her enthusiasm making each activity in turn seem the one thing most worth doing. Hazel's arrival synchronised with the birth of the Chorleywood Operetta, in which, as she says, she "lived." She can still be relied upon to play and sing any or all of it from memory.

It was the same partnership in art from which the School Song sprang—Miss Upcott's words with Mr. Bevan's music—that brought us this rollicking operetta. The songs were about anything that took the author's fancy, (Practising, Walks, Half-term, The Bazaar, Sport-X, and so on), and as each theme found words, their music followed so fast that music lessons in 1924 were

lit with the exuberance of these outpourings. The songs were knit together by a mock tribunal which asked the questions to which the songs gave answers. It had, within a school setting, the lilt of Gilbert and Sullivan—and without their business worries! There have been many revivals, with or without audiences, since its first appearance in December, 1924; and the tunes have also served for dances and marches. We were fortunate in being given this chance of laughing at ourselves. A sense of humour can grow in a resilient atmosphere, and become a most precious pearl to those who might have been over-weighted by physical handicap. Original composition was stimulated too. Freye wrote and produced two plays (fantasies) for which Elizabeth contributed music, for February 6th entertainments, one of them ambitious in scope and including the whole school in its cast. Hazel composed the "Cromwellian Suite" (for piano) to honour her hero, and had Sir Henry Wood as one of her friendly critics.

By 1924 we were enlivened by the youngest group too, for this included Hilda, Elaine, Ruth and Barbara, who all came straight from home when about six years old. They thrived as "Ds" in the care of Miss Matheson, who, with a degree and Froebel training, brought also a sisterly calm and understanding to her little form. These four children, having no sight, had not before had playmates on equal terms, and it was interesting to watch their games develop, while Milly (Miss Hallam's assistant) kept a motherly eye on them as she sewed. Having no memory of sight, they seemed unconscious of the lack of it and, for a while, took it for granted that they would be able to read print books as they got older. Seeing and perceiving were one to them. Elaine has told us that she first realised that she lacked some power that others had after a child with some sight had challenged her reference to a fence with "You can't see it" to which she replied "I *can*!" and went up to touch it to prove that she was right. But this incident, thought over, led her to know that there were others, even children, who saw things quite out of reach of touch or hearing.

Children coming up from the intimacy of our own Preparatory Department contributed much to the easy relations between pupils and staff, as well as to good standards in work. These first four little ones, becoming fluent Braillists when quite young, had minds free for the matter in hand, and they worked their way through the school, the youngest in their forms, able and keen to tackle more subjects—German was added to French and Latin—than most later cohorts.

There were several of our blind children whose hours of sound sleep were short. Closing their eyes could not shut out the world of sound that had been their chief stimulus through the day, and they were roused by slight noises, or lay long awake. This naturally led to the smuggling of Braille books into bed, to imaginative thinking and story-making, and at times to more active wanderings

at night. A child, Nina, who came to school exceptionally young (before she was five), brought this home to us. Her collection of about forty of the metal discs from the base of the radiators ("For money for Snokey, my dragon") must have accounted for some creaks in the night; and we gave her the credit for the little hoard of food morsels found under a loose board in the classroom, and various treasures from the garden stored in a piano! Some of her quiet hours were spent in reading from a strange assortment of periodicals and books, whose titles (in Braille) had arrested her wondering mind; the volumes dug out from their hiding place under the mattress. This doubtless helped to develop her early sense of the poetry in life, and of the use of words. Two lines from her verse on "Spring," written when about seven, illustrate this:—

The children said "What is this thing, that makes the world so bright?"
 "'Tis I," they heard a fairy sing, "'Tis Spring, born in the night."

Night gave Nina time, too, to plan adventures for the day, sometimes with others, but often alone or in the company of the cows, or of Bess, the black horse. She longed to ride, and when ponies were parked in our field she managed, from the wire fence, to climb on to the one she considered most horse-like, but it sat down, and she fell off backwards. Other ponies came round, and she found a shaggy one she could hold on to. All in good time she was one of those to have riding lessons under Mrs. Mackenzie. Something of this experience she expressed in "Power":—

The gentle curve of his sleek black sides,
 The toss of his kingly head;
 The spring of his step as he smoothly strides,
 And the world at his feet is spread.

The leap into space at the touch of the heels;
 The wildness of madness he knows;
 Then the pull of the snaffle and curb-rein he feels,
 And calmed, he reluctantly slows.

Now held at a steady hand canter, he strains
 And battles the curb all he can;
 Then settles himself to the will of the reins—
 Ah, this is the power of man!

Later on, in 1935, with Miss Dewhurst in charge, our Kindergarten included some small boys, and so served as a Preparatory to Worcester College. The first arrivals, Peter and Tony, were only four. Their attitude to animals was, at first, in strange contrast to Nina's, for they seemed happy only with comfortably stuffed toy animals. A visit to the Farm School at Wendover Dene gave them a chance to meet young animals under conditions that helped them to gain confidence. Soon after, rabbits and later guinea-pigs were introduced at Chorleywood College. When we had more and rather bigger boys, lack of confidence was seldom evident;

and it was they, rather than the little girls, who were prominent when visitors were about ! The boys came at a time when there was no dog resident at school. Crusoe, our Matron's wire-haired terrier, had gone with her to hospital life, leaving his kennel, with its day and night "nurseries," to become the headquarters of many of their games.

Our first dog-boarder had been Ben, the retriever, whom Miss Riddell adopted because he was losing his sight. He had long lain at rest beneath the weeping willow, but verses about him made favourite recitations—one a co-operative effort of the "Cs" of his time (Miss Day in the Chair !) :—

Ben my boy, Ben my boy, where have you been ?
I've been in the woodlands so gay and so green.

Ben my boy, Ben my boy, what did you there ?
I pulled a rabbit from out of his lair.

Ben my boy, Ben my boy, what did you next ?
I brought him straight home, and my mistress was vexed.

Ben my boy, Ben my boy, what did she say ?
She said I was naughty, and sent me away.

Ben my boy, Ben my boy, where did you go ?
I went in my kennel, my tail hanging low.

Ben my boy, Ben my boy, do you repent ?
Oh yes, if I do not again find that scent.

Ben my boy, Ben my boy, are you forgiven ?
Oh yes, for she kissed me, and now I'm in heaven !

And Miss Upcott's salutation :—

They laid you under a weeping tree,
You with the laugh-lit eyes.
We seldom think of you lying there,
Who know you in Paradise.

Are rabbits just as elusive and sweet
As you found them, under the shrubs ?
Do you boast of their succulent flavour
In the heavenly doggy Clubs ?

We're all of us just as you left us here,
The Walk going out just the same.
Still known to come in a little bit late
Without your rheumatics to blame.

The Sport-X ball gets its run at break,
It rolls just as fast and as far ;
And left alone on the garden path,
It wonders wherever you are !

Good Hunting, dear Ben, in your countryside,
Where the scent knows never a frost ;
And you are the person that takes the Walk,
And your missus never is lost.

We remember you here for the thousand ways
You proved, as no talking can,
That tho' a retriever is always a dog,
He may be a Gentleman !

Anthony was greeted in the same magazine, the only other pet of the time, barring the chickens. But he was a very small affair—a white mouse, limited to his cage in the winter garden—a gift from Maltman's Green, the friendly school near Gerrard's Cross with which a number of visits were interchanged ; for they were boarders, too, and liked long walks on Saturdays. Communal Anthony was the precursor of white mice of private ownership, Helen Osler's being the most memorable, as suggested in her verse " My Mice " :

O many's the time I have longed to keep mice ;
But nobody else seemed to think they'd be nice.
So I gave up thinking I ever should,
Till I thought, " Why, I'll keep them at Chorleywood ! "
Well, the very first night I got back to school
I let one get loose on the floor, like a fool—
He crawled down my leg, and got on to the ground ;
It was ages and ages before he was found.
And the very next night I did it again,
So they said, very rightly, " You'd better refrain
From losing your mice on the Common-room floor,
For really, you know, it's a bit of a bore."
There's one point, first expressed in strong terms by my brother,
(But then one sense of smell is more keen than another).
I feel bound to admit, from a keen sense of duty,
The smell of the mice does not add to their beauty !
But it isn't as bad as my brother makes out,
Yet there rose, as from one, a unanimous shout,
When at Christmas I first had my mice as a present,
" Oh ! the smell of those mice ! How extremely unpleasant ! "
But their many good points quite make up for this failing ;
And please think of this when too deeply inhaling
The scent of a mouse, for I know if you saw them,
My innocent mice, you would simply adore them.

The only other " private pets " of these years were goldfish. For a while they travelled to and from school each term, requiring much concentration of effort to ensure safe transit, and I am reminded that in London the dignified, top-hatted station-master would meet the train and convey the goldfish to the barrier ! But hands were needed for so many other claims (including suitcases and partners) on the walk across the common to our station that the time came when owners had to decide whether their goldfish should remain at home or at school. For those left at school during the holidays, Robbins, the estate carpenter, made a kind of perforated pram,

which floated in the Big Garden pool, where Jim, Mr. Stacey's son, fed them. If these captives suffered it was not for want of attention.

Although my references have generally been to our blind pupils, whose handicap was more definite and for whom the school was primarily organised, at least half our numbers had some sight which they used to very good account, helping others at times of need, describing things they saw, and contributing to a more normal life and more varied interests than would be practicable if all were blind. All were handicapped enough to make a class blackboard useless, and much reading of print inadvisable. Though some could read when print was held very close, others with magnifying aids, and yet others when print was of special size or type, such practices were at Chorleywood left to free time. Education was carried on through Braille reading and writing, fluency in which led to the use of class text-books, the school library, and an expansive lending library (the National Library for the Blind) available also in after-school days. In a class including both blind and partially sighted pupils, the better concentration of the blind had a stimulating effect on the partially sighted.

To this school community came, in 1924, the first pupil whose highly myopic condition caused her transfer from a high school—Dorothy. With her glasses, she seemed to see everything; but at that time many eye specialists were nervous that much reading, close work, or physical strain, might cause detachment of the retina, with risk of blindness. So that reading might become possible again for her through Braille, and general school work proceed under conditions giving every hope of saving her sight, Dorothy joined our ranks, followed by a succession of other highly myopic girls. There must have been points for and against; but for most of such girls, I think, the ability to take a full part in the life, work and games instead of being "odd man out," and the sense of having a greater use of sight than their co-pupils, rather than being constantly reminded of its deficiency, helped them to gain confidence.

Betty, with very short sight, was a pupil in a private school, sitting in front in a class of younger girls, and often absent with headaches, when her mother became attracted by the educational advantages of Chorleywood College. As Betty's eye specialist thought such a school might be psychologically bad for one with so much sight, she came first for a ten-day trial trip and "felt at Chorleywood complete friendliness, and the joy of joining in everything; learnt uncontracted Braille in those ten days, and was thrilled with it."

Peggy Campbell came in the same term, in 1926, as Betty, after an exceptionally unsettled childhood, and little schooling. Peggy's field of vision was small and focusing was slow, but, characteristically, there was no hesitation in her movements. Her personality was greatly developed by the difficulties and sorrows that came her

way and were met with a generous heart. This pen portrait (Miss Upcott's), is quoted from the magazine following her death in 1937 :

PEGGY CAMPBELL

Born 9th November, 1910. Died 3rd May, 1937. Chorleywood College, May, 1926, to July, 1930.

Her friends remember Peggy first, I think, by something robust and boy-like that coloured her attitude to life. This was no pose, she was very feminine in her gaiety and in her quick sympathy. But she was never "soft," least of all towards herself. She seemed not to cherish illusions either about herself or others. She met one in a down-right fashion ; it would have been impossible to pay her a mere compliment. As a pupil, she would sometimes answer the conventional, " You understand that ? " by " No " and a smile that embraced the whole situation. She did not understand, let that reflect upon whom it would, she would not pretend. She dealt with other people's incomprehension or failings in the same way, arriving at the fact that something was lacking, without thereby creating a situation. There was an uprightness, a forthrightness, about her, an absence of complex, that was refreshing in a growing-up girl. Off-duty, so to speak, and ragging with her friends, she again brought a lad, rather than a lass, to mind. She was quite impervious to teasing, and her onslaughts were wholesale, with the hint of a punch behind them. She was a mighty thrower at Sport-X and it is not difficult to see her, as captain, standing ready, squared up for a boundary.

Her character was not one that had the delicacy of a drawing ; rather it seemed carved in broad, deep lines. She could never have been unfair, never have lied. She was always friendly towards those whose peculiarities might have offered a target for her candid wit. Always on the side of the under-dog, always on the look-out for someone who might have suffered in the daily routine of school life. Thus, she herself, never became one of a mob, even in her junior days. She was always dependable, not only thoughtful, but understanding. Although her constitution can never have been very sound, she was the last person one could associate with invalidism. There was something too strong and unselfish about her whole bearing for that. And when we got to know of her real suffering and even to see it, she did not let it mark itself upon our minds. It seemed something alien to Peggy. Even in the certain knowledge of the gravity of her illness, she seemed to us too vigorous, essentially, to lay her life down. Now, realising the blessedness of her release, she comes to mind as she was, full of heart, a figure moving certainly along on her own brave lines towards the fulfilling of what was outlined here.

She was charming to look upon. Her colouring pale but wholesome, the eyes that saw little, deep set and blue, a light about her face that shone with comprehension and with humour. She seems to turn and smile as she leaves us and her peculiarly sound, deep voice says that all is ultimately good—and so " all manner of thing shall be well.'

The autumn term of 1928 brought five partially sighted girls from various big public schools. Naturally their " big school " ways and our home-grown ones needed adjustment ; their efforts to keep pace with unhandicapped girls had to be diverted to slowing down the pace to that of blind children practising independence. But the improvement in health that was typical, and their sisterly co-operation with their blind companions, as well as their enterprising after-school careers, confirmed our hopes that Chorleywood

College was not a hole-and-corner way out of their difficulty. Since then, however, medical opinion has become less alarmist, and it is likely that many highly myopic girls, and others with useful though defective sight, will be fitted into ordinary schools with little modification in their programmes. Those in whom the condition is rather more serious will probably be diverted to special boarding schools where general health and residual sight are carefully guarded, while ordinary print is used with magnifying glasses or held as close as need be, supplemented by oral work.

Braille will doubtless remain the medium for a liberal education for all for whom print is impracticable.

In 1929 I put forward a scheme for the school to develop farming on a small scale, chiefly to give the partially sighted girls an extra outlet for their physical energies, and to explore its vocational possibilities. Facts and figures were collected for starting dairy work and increasing the poultry; much help being given by Mr. Reid of the Hertfordshire Institute of Agriculture at St. Albans, and other experts. A Committee sat upon it and seemed favourably disposed, but the project was eventually abandoned. Since then, the grazing ground has been sold and become a neighbour's park, but I still hope the farm scheme will crop up and thrive somewhere, sometime.

One good result of the school's growing but slowly to maturity was its inclusion, at times, of adult students from abroad. They could then be admitted without prejudicing the chances of applicants from our own islands. So, in 1923, came Marga from Sweden, a little later Marie from Austria and Mildrid from Norway, each to study English in order to qualify further for teaching it in her own country. They joined school classes in English subjects and also had individual coaching. Later Miss Javorsky from Czechoslovakia and Miss Halén from Sweden were prepared successfully for the London University Certificate of proficiency in English.

At school age we had pupils from Italy, South Africa, Mauritius and the Channel Islands, as well as from all parts of the British Isles, so contributing to general knowledge, and reducing any risk of insularity that the segregation of blind children might be expected to produce.

The early impressions our small but unique school made upon its pupils were, of course, as varied as the conditions from which they came. Hearing from "Old Girls" of their vivid memories has been engrossing, reminding one of how much it is the little things that count. Monique came first for a year, when about eleven, while her family were over from Mauritius. She remembers "the first morning, when others were making their beds, being landed with stilts in the garden, wondering what they were for, and how much it mattered!" Her black Nannie had not co-operated in practising free movements, so she had much to tackle that year; the bewilderment of lessons being in English, of companions she

found it difficult to fit in with, and the little mishaps that occurred when she tried to be independent in movement. After two years back in Mauritius, with Dorothy (by this time a qualified teacher) to coach her, she returned to Chorleywood, entered with zest into its work and its sociabilities, and won the Fawcett Memorial Scholarship and Entrance to Somerville College, Oxford, to read English. She had no natural sense of direction to help her to enjoy the freedom of movement practised so valiantly under Miss McConnell's direction, and she tells how she disliked being a "sub" in a Sport-X match, because she felt the others' consternation lest she might again miss those corners and go charging off into the unknown!

In religious outlook the intimate living together of members of different bodies (Church of England, Roman Catholic, Free Church, Christian Scientist, Society of Friends, Swedenborgian, as well as of explorers unattached), brought a tolerance, or, I should say, a more positive quality—an understanding value of sincerity in worship wherever found. School prayers, in the early morning and on Sunday evening, were of course non-denominational and my part in them, since I was "unattached" except to the attitude of the Friends, tended to have the same thought-centre as in the hymn "God be in my head," or rather the idea of "tuning in" to God, the Guiding Spirit.

Through the stories of pioneers for social welfare and truth, the stress was on action in life, and the growth of a sense of true values to direct it. Our first hymns were chosen for their simplicity, but others' claims saw to it that the lengthening list gave outlet to emotion, let reason say what it may!

Plans were of course made for the girls to attend, as far as possible, the churches of their parents' choice. Many of those who were members of the Church of England went, as they became older, in small groups further afield than the parish church, to Rickmansworth and to Chenies. As traffic made the main road dangerous and so taboo for walkers, the girls would go by long and circuitous routes to get there, testifying to the value they placed on the music, the discipline and the sacramental character of the parish church at Rickmansworth, or to the scholarly approach at Chenies, whence the vicar, Dr. Smith, brought his Christianity home to us, too, through talks on various subjects to the Literary Society.

The Scripture teaching from autumn 1921 until 1939 was undertaken by Miss Upcott with a London Diploma in Theology, to add academic knowledge to her own conviction. She was succeeded by Miss I. Shewell-Cooper with similar qualifications. In the main school, although only one period a week was generally given to Scripture, apart from special church classes, and for those being prepared for confirmation, our girls found themselves better grounded than many others with whom they conferred, and Miss

Shewell-Cooper has summed up her experience, shared I know by Miss Upcott, as follows :—

I started teaching at Chorleywood in September, 1939, having taught in a number of schools. My impression, received on my first day and never altered, was that I could tackle with these girls questions and parts of the Bible that were in advance of those suitable for girls in their age groups in a "sighted" school. One encountered a realisation of the profundity of life's problems, an awareness of spiritual values, which made teaching extremely interesting. Whereas, on the other hand, the ordinary fourteen or fifteen-year-old girl in a scripture lesson would ask a number of more or less objective questions, and discuss hotly, the girls at Chorleywood said much less, and were content to sit and listen. One had often a struggle to get them to take their share in the lesson. Yet all the while, I was aware of a real understanding of the things of which we were speaking. My considered judgment—though such a statement may be as inaccurate as most generalisations are—is that whereas, in a "sighted" school, about ten per cent of the girls give one an impression of having real, personal faith bred of conviction and experience, at Chorleywood, on the other hand, I should say that about ten per cent gave me the impression of being without it. In my four years there I have not changed my opinion. I supposed it to be due to adversity, which mercifully is very often something which brings us through our need to God.

Yes, Chorleywood girls were, and doubtless are, good listeners. Our friends and relations needed little persuasion to come and talk on their various pet subjects, and would be delighted to find a very still audience, somewhat passive in appearance through inability to watch the lecturer's face, suddenly break through, when occasion arose, into smiles or laughter ; and ready at question time to follow up their own objectives.

My own father's interests were many, and so his subjects of talks were diverse, including How we are governed, The Coal Crisis, Sir Thomas More, China, and How we were fed in the War. He was felt to be a personal friend as well as a lecturer, for he knew many of the girls by name, and was a good conversationalist on the listening side too.

Mr. E. A. Upcott, for many years a master at Wellington College, spoke on Socrates, on How the Bible was compiled, and on Puritanism ; Mr. Clark on Prison Reform ; also, from their own personal experiences, Miss N. Cullis on Serbia ; Miss H. Gamwell on Big Game in Africa, and on her war work in France ; Mr. Greenstreet on Sir E. Shackleton's Expedition ; and Miss K. Thornbery on Farming.

We had started with some satisfaction in the feeling that public examinations need not "cramp our style." But it was not long before we realised their value, and that they can be helpful rather than cramping if taken at the right time, by the right people, and in the right subjects ; in short, without pressure. In the first two years we had "tests" only, small affairs within each form, at the very beginning sometimes oral :—

BRAILLE ALPHABET.

1st LINE	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
2nd LINE	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
3rd LINE	U	V	X	Y	Z	and	for	of	the	with
4th LINE	ch	gh	sh	th	wh	ed	er	ou	ow	W
5th LINE	ea i be bb	con cc	dis dd	en	ff	gg	“ ?”	in	”	
6th LINE	Fraction-line sign st	ing	Numeral sign ble	Poetry sign ar	Apostrophe.	Hyphen	com			
7th LINE	Accent sign				Italic or Decimal- point sign	Letter sign	Capital sign			

Used in forming Contractions: —• —•• —••• —•••• —••••• —••••••

Compound Signs	•	Dash	Square Brackets	Inner Inverted Commas
	—•••	—••••	1—4 1—4 1—4 1—4 1—4 1—4 1—4 1—4 1—4	1—4 1—4 1—4 1—4 1—4 1—4 1—4 1—4

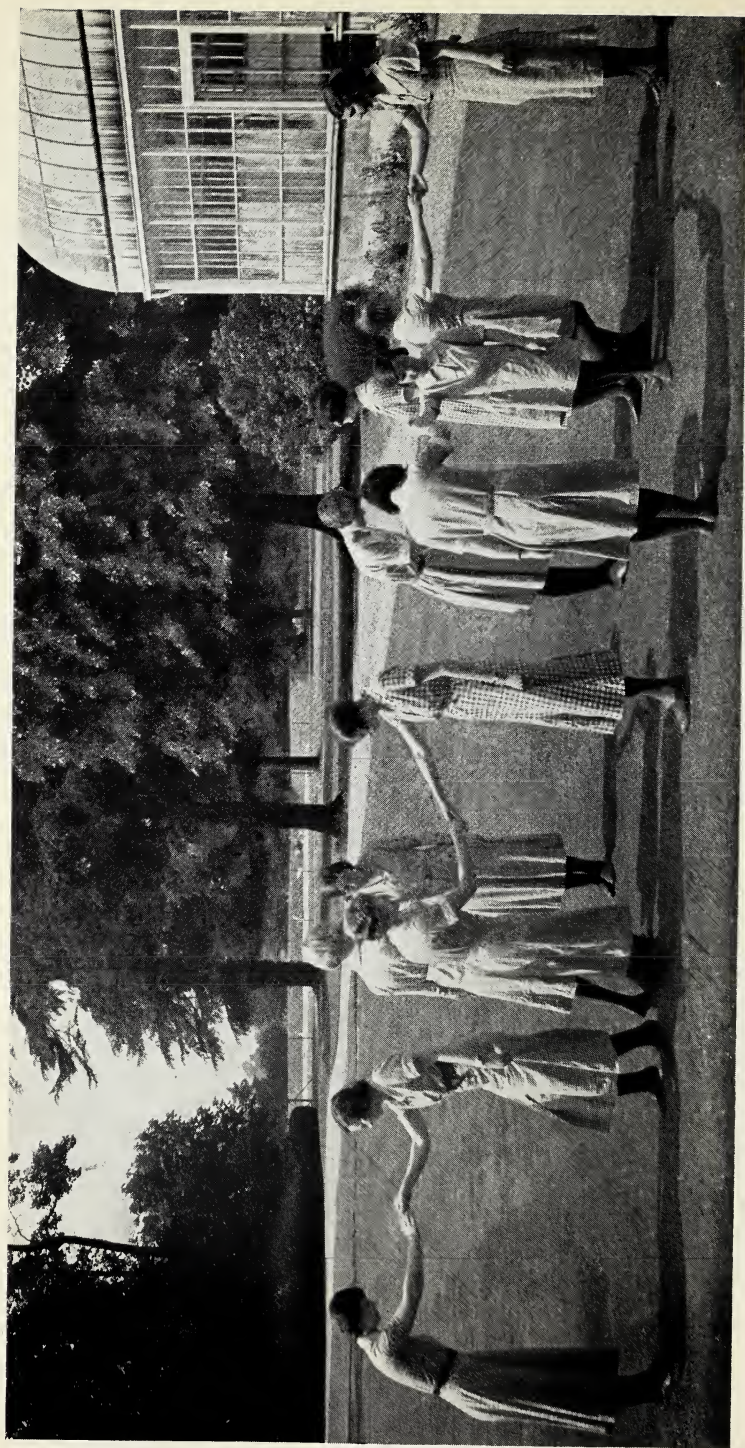


PACKING BRAILLE BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY (1936)

Left to Right : Joan Grant, Marjorie Wood (Minor), Hazel Belbin



READING AND PLAYING FROM BRAILLE MUSIC (1939)
Ruth Darby



COUNTRY DANCING (1935)

Left to Right: Mabel Judd, Muriel Grace, Mary Simes, Joan Grant, Mary Bonham, Marjorie Wood (Major), Joan Woodcraft, Ruby Henderson, Marjorie Wood (Minor), Doris John, Dorothy Agar, Freda Park

Question : Why does the sun disappear for a large part of twenty-four hours ?

Answer : Because the night cometh on.

And the same optimist to the question : In which direction does the earth rotate ? answered, The right way round.

The first public examination was in 1923, in Singing (Associated Board of Music, Higher Division), and brought control to Greta's lovely voice. Responsions followed and St. Hugh's Entrance by a student, Alice Cunningham, already well on her academic way ; then a series of music examinations (Piano, Singing and Harmony) of various grades up to Advanced by 1928. School Certificates were gained, Entrance to Girton College, St. Christopher's Sunday School Certificate (Teachers') and in July, 1928, Part I of the National Froebel Union Teachers' Certificate. Later, pupils took Higher Certificates, Scholarship and Entrance Examinations to the Colleges of various universities, and for vocational purposes, examinations of the Royal Society of Arts and of the College of Teachers of the Blind, as well as London University's Certificate of Proficiency in English (for teachers). In fact, as need arose, pupils and staff stretched their wings. That many of us tackled subjects in which we were by no means qualified proved, I think, a "good thing." It kept us alert and added a very friendly co-operative touch to the combined effort, where we were all breaking new ground. New-comers on the staff had much to learn from the girls about Braille, in spite of efforts to assimilate it in advance. Miss Upcott, with natural but not academic qualifications, undertook most of the history, and one of her pupils won an open scholarship to Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, with history as her main subject ! Even Greek was studied a few lessons ahead of the pupil who needed it, by our valiant Miss Deavin, and most of us contributed one lecture in a course on Evolution of the earth, man, races, language, etc.

The requirements of Nature Knowledge in Froebel Part I stimulated the observational powers of the staff "How do cows sit down ?" "In what order do horses' legs move ?" and a lasting hobby for some of us, through rousing a real interest in birds, their appearance, nests, and especially their songs. We had gifts of stuffed birds (for handling, not under glass) and, as time went on, of bird-song records. But most memorable were Mr. A. Monk-Jones's visits, to help us identify the bird songs and special notes as we followed him round the garden and up on to the roof one very early morning to hear the dawn chorus.

The headmistress of a great London school said when she heard I had been appointed to this special school, "You'll find it a lonely furrow." I never did. Although there was all too little time to be sociable in the ordinary sense, members of educational and other organisations were most understanding and human, in spite of—or because of?—the unique character of our work. Thus the Association of Head Mistresses passed a special bye-law to let me in,

for otherwise the smallness of the school would have made me ineligible for membership. This, through conferences, literature, and occasionally personal consultations, kept me in touch with secondary schools in general. The College of Teachers of the Blind elected me to their Executive Committee, so that I was able to meet heads of elementary schools of long standing and representatives of the home-teaching service.

Following visits by H.M.I. Mr. Phillips and Dr. Eichholz to discover when the school would be established enough for full inspection, the decision was made that this should be carried out in October, 1925. This involved sending in advance to the Board of Education full details of pupils, staff, curriculum and much else. The thirty-two pupils (all boarders) were at that time in forms A, B, C and D, with different groupings in some subjects. There were three full time assistant mistresses, and visiting members for dancing and music, besides Miss Upcott's classes in Scripture and history; some work on the school side was also carried through by the Secretary-housekeeper, the Matron and her assistant. Four of His Majesty's Inspectors spent three days with us, noting our way of life, diet, games, out-of-school occupations, as well as the main work. The process was a cheerful one, interesting to us, and, I believe, to them. Dr. Eichholz knew the elementary blind schools, but the other Inspectors were unaccustomed to Braille and other adaptations for blind pupils, and were comparing our standards with the public secondary schools they normally inspected. The results were entirely helpful. The Report was appreciative of what was being done, and must have helped to justify those on the N.I.B. Council who had decided to support Chorleywood College in spite of its cost. As a result, the school became "Recognised as Efficient," which meant that Local Education Authorities could have confidence in helping pupils to the school, and qualified teachers would be able to count their period of service in it towards the time required for superannuation.

It may seem strange that the school, planned for forty-five, was not already full. The conditions were good, the education officially approved, and it was the only one of its kind, making a liberal education, with full development of the individual socially and mentally, its ambition. The fact that it grew slowly though steadily in its early life was due, I think, to the time-lag in the realisation by Education Authorities and others that it could help blind and partially blind girls towards financial as well as mental independence. The total number of blind children in England and Wales was not great (in 1925 there were 4,659 under 21), and the majority were from poor homes, the trouble often due to bad conditions at birth, a state of affairs now practically eliminated. For these children, the parents and their advisers had to give first importance to wage-earning prospects. There were well-established training schools leading to industrial workshops (for girls, flat and round machine

knitting, weaving, etc.), which gave reasonable security, with grants for training and augmentation of earnings. It seemed then, apparently, too great a risk for Education Authorities and heads of schools to encourage higher education, with its professional outlets so uncertain. However, some parents pressed their children's claims for a "public school" education, and some girls came on to Chorleywood College at or after sixteen, the age when elementary education for blind children ended and vocational training normally began. Then came the stage when Gardner's Trust and Local Education Authorities allowed their scholarships and grants to be applied, at Chorleywood, to pupils younger than sixteen, that they might secure the preliminary grounding in its wider curriculum.

In October, 1932, another four of His Majesty's Inspectors spent three days at Chorleywood College. This inspection led to full recognition by the Board (now Ministry) of Education with direct grant, £25 for each pupil and its very practical blessing to the Education Authorities, which increasingly gave financial support to enable pupils to come. So another dream came true; the miner's and the millionaire's daughter and the child with no home and no means could and did share the College on equal terms, long before the Education Act of 1944 made this mixing generally possible.

During the years leading up to this new period in the school's life there had been changes of personnel in the Chief Executive Officer of the N.I.B. We had lost a good friend in Henry Stainsby, who died in 1924 after forty-five years' work for blind people. His successor, Sir Alexander Diack, used his influence to see that the teaching members of the staff were put on a footing in salary and superannuation schemes approaching that of other public schools; serious illness caused his retirement in early 1928.

Mr. W. McG. Eagar was then appointed Secretary-General at the N.I.B., and came that autumn to visit us, when I remember his concern that the school should be well equipped, and his special interest in the development of the physical training work. At this time the administrative organisation seemed to grow complex, as doubtless had the responsibilities of the N.I.B., and I felt a risk of Chorleywood College losing the value of being so small if absorbed into the atmosphere of a big office, but the balance was in the hands of the newly-appointed Board of Governors on which three headmistresses served: Miss Crosthwaite, of Wycombe Abbey, Miss Archibald of St. Albans High School, and Miss Huskisson of Harrow Secondary School; also Miss E. C. Gedge, Dr. Eichholz, T. H. Tylor (ex-Worcester boy and Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford), J. H. Batty, to whom we owed *The Cedars*, and Captain Sir Beachcroft Towse, V.C., in the chair. It was fine of these distinguished men and women to give so generously of their time and thought. The school owes them much. There were others, too, outstandingly Miss McCall and Mrs. Wheelwright, who joining the Board later gave very active service.

Of Captain Sir Beachcroft Towse what can I say? He was behind us, with us, and before us, through all my years at Chorleywood College, for he supported, encouraged and inspired full life for the school and its individual members. It was to him I could go when I needed to see some problem from another point of view. He saw things, good and bad, in a big, generous way. Claims upon his time and interest were boundless. Surely his portrait (facing page 33) will help those who have not known him to sense the vision of this blind man. My mind can always recapture, too, the smile that broke through when, as we threaded our way through the crowds at our bazaar, we were tracked and interrupted by an eager question in little Peggy's clear voice. He was glad she was at home in her school.

He died on June 21st, 1948.

At the Memorial Service at the Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace, these few spoken words echoed in all our hearts:—

We are gathered together to remember and to give thanks for Beachcroft Towse. His was a wonderful life. Born on St. George's Day, 1864, an officer of the Gordon Highlanders, he had a military record of gallantry. Twice he won the Victoria Cross. The last of these deeds cost him his sight. Yet his heroic conquest was such that it has been said of him: "His blindness was beneath him, a slain dragon, and he stood above it, martial and chivalric." He assumed a position of leadership in the welfare of the blind, and as Chairman, and latterly President, of the National Institute for the Blind, he made perhaps his greatest contribution in the training of soldiers and civilians blinded in the two world wars.

He was a devoted leader and a great gentleman, a Knight Commander of the Victorian Order, and a member of H.M. Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms. He stood guard at the Lying-in-State of four Sovereigns.

His courtesy and kindness smoothed many difficulties, his unselfish service was the pattern of duty, his character an inspiration to us all.

CHAPTER VI

OUR WAYS

DURING the period of growth, when our school drew such diverse individuals into its fellowship, various plans for compensating for their common handicap were introduced. We grew so used to adapting methods to blindness that the school life seemed normal, or only a slight variation of the normal, and new members of the staff were quickly shown the ropes by others. Independence, in spite of blindness, was practised throughout the daily routine. Picture the Brailled hymn sheets at prayers, the reading hands holding the paper low and heads and voices freely raised ; the Brailled file from which personal letters were fetched, the shelves, with Brailled staff names, into which written Preparation was put ; the long letters home, in type or Braille (uncontracted for most parents) ; the Braille notice-boards ; the dining-room cheerful with flowers, but no longer with a member of the staff at each table ; the camel bell at the end of each period swung by the appointed ringer the length of the long corridor ; no running here, for confidence cannot be gained through collisions, neither can maths-type and Stainsbys function if let fall.

To increase efficiency in reading Braille we explored various methods. Occasionally reading-aloud tests were held for appraising progress, and deciding who should do extra reading in the daily after-dinner break to gain fluency and accuracy. On one such occasion, an examinee, feeling speed to be all-important, cheerfully read of " men who built warhorses for their gods," but when bidden to try again found they had built only " warehouses for their goods." But careless Braille can do worse than this, as when a " poultry notice " meant to be " Feed the broody hen " read " Feed the bloody hen ! " Some of the partially blind girls were able to read Braille by sight, risking eye-strain, and impeding real progress in its use ; so various devices were adopted, including the provision of bags big enough to cover the open book when read by touch.

Expeditions were planned that enabled the children to make the most of their effective senses. For instance we visited the Zoo, and Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, C.B.E., F.R.S., sent me a card of introduction to the various keepers. Two blind children in the Lower School (Mollie and Dora) wrote an account of the visit, for our magazine. I quote it, to dispel the doubt so often expressed by mystified folk as to the good of such expeditions to those who do not see.

One night last term at supper-time Miss Monk came in and said that we were going to the Zoo on half-term Monday. We were very excited, and we counted the days to going, and wanted it ever so badly. When the morning came it was very snowy and cold, but still we went, as we should have been very disappointed if we had not gone. At Baker Street Station we had to walk a good distance through the

snow, until we reached the Zoo, and there went through the turnstiles.

The first house we went into was very hot, for the temperature of the animals. First we saw tortoises, and we held two tiny ones in our hands. Then the keeper lifted Hilda, who is only six, and put her on the back of a tortoise, which was 250 years old, and would probably live to be 500. The keeper hammered his shell to make him walk along. Then we held a baby alligator, ten years old, and twenty inches long.

From there we went to the lion house. It was a very big one, and had cages all down one side. The keeper very kindly fed the big lion and made him roar. He had a long fork with a chunk of raw meat on the end of it. He dangled it up and down, and the lion tried to get it, and so roared very loudly, for he was afraid he was not going to have it. Then we went along a narrow passage to the part behind the cages, and there we found two baby lions, two years old. We climbed up a ladder and stroked them, which was very nice, and one of them licked Freda's hand.

There was also a hyena in a cage, and the keeper treated him the same as the lion to make him laugh. He did make a noise, and made us all laugh.

Next we went to the mynah birds, rather like our blackbirds, which the keeper made talk. They said "Hallo!" and "What's the time?" and "Goodbye"; and when the keeper said "Puss" one of them said "Miau!" in a very loud voice. There were some very sweet-singing birds as well.

We went into the monkey house, and then into a smaller one where the monkeys came out of their cages. They did not like the girls' slippery mackintoshes, but Dora, who was wearing a cloth raincoat, had six monkeys climbing up her arm. One, who was called Jacky, went and shut himself up in his own cage, and then he played with our hands and kissed them.

But the sweetest thing of all was a lovely black bear with very thick hair which we stroked. We all stood round quite close to him, while he sat up outside the house. We had to be careful not to tread on his feet, as he did not like it. We gave him spoonfuls of golden syrup, which he thought very nice, and then he took the tin between his paws and buried his nose inside it, and licked it all round. He came from Canada, and had been given to the Zoo by the Prince of Wales.

Very soon after this we went and ate our sandwiches, and bought some lovely buns and hot milk; and when we were warm we set out for Baker Street again.

When we got back we had to walk across the common in a terrible snowstorm, and most of us got very wet feet. As soon as we got in we were all bundled upstairs and in five minutes were in hot baths, and soon after we were in bed and having a lovely tea, and feeling beautifully warm and comfy.

In outdoor games we were experimenting. For the summer we made up a new game that we called Quickit. It was played with a wicker ball and wickets from which the ball would rebound—no batsmen required! But, as no one invented a ball that would sound after it was still, fielding by a blind player was haphazard. A bowling-board was erected, marked out with scores that enabled those practising bowling to be told how near—or far!—their ball lay from the target. Bumble-puppy and a kind of clock-golf were also tried out, especially for those with sight, but netball-tennis for them was the really successful summer game, and became well established in 1929. This was a modification of lawn tennis, using

its rules and scoring, but played with a net-ball which was flung, when served, from the court line, caught and returned after, or before, the first bounce.

In the winter of 1922 we started Sport-X, a vigorous game in which we all joined. It involved hard running by those with no sight as well as those with some. An article by one of the staff has this reference to it :—

Games began. Miss Monk invented them. It was necessary to play as though one played for Roedean. Woe to her who attempted to potter, as though a game were merely an easy way for the staff to employ several girls at once ; woe to her who deserted effort in the expectation of a whistle ! One played until the whistle blew, as hard as one possibly could . . .

Well, Well ! There were a few who did not play for health reasons, and a very few, I fear, to whom it was somewhat of a trial ; but to the majority it has been a challenge to their own growing powers, as well as a contest with " the other side," achieving the rewards of valour. I am still moved by the courage of the blind " runners," whether at the tentative stage, linking hands with an adept, or in their Sport-X prime, thundering alone across the ground and round the boundary paths.

By 1924 Sport-X had developed enough to justify the experiment of challenging sighted schools to matches. Why not Wycombe Abbey ? They rose to it. A team and supporters came over by coach, our girls gave a short demonstration to clarify the rules the visiting team had only read. Then the match began. Teams consisted of seven runners and four fielders. Each runner in turn threw a small football and ran to and fro across the lawn to the gravel boundaries for as long as her fielders could keep the ball in play, and out of their opponents' grasp, by kicking and punching it about the field. When an opposing fielder seized the ball, she ran and put it into the basket opposite the other team's base ; the whistle blew, the runs completed were scored, and the throw passed over to the other team. The Chorleywood runners were blind, the fielders had enough sight to enable them to keep touch with the ball's whereabouts. This, briefly, was the game of the Wycombe Abbey *v.* Chorleywood College contest that May in 1924. Wycombe won of course by 40 runs to 34, but the experiment was justified, for the match was a good one and was soon followed up with other visiting teams, including Blackheath High School and Harrow Girls' Secondary School. We experienced winning as well as losing—increasingly so. The game became harder. In 1926 the ground had to be re-set to give a safer run-in, and the runners then scored also by boundary runs. Other adjustments too were made that led to the game as described in the Appendix (page 144).

Besides the exhilaration of a vigorous game, Sport-X brought natural contacts with other schoolgirls, as Chorleywoodians showed

them round (often introducing them to Braille), entertained them at tea, and perhaps to music and dancing afterwards. There were return visits too, not for Sport-X, which must be played on a field with boundary paths that feet can recognise, but for netball-tennis, played on ordinary tennis courts, as well as for music recitals and other common interests.

We tried out all sorts of athletic sports, too, in the early autumn terms and, at intervals, in later years; racing of all kinds (running, walking, skipping, three-legged, wheelbarrow, driving, hopping) and various other often ludicrous tricks. As a rule the sound of a clapper (wood on wood, as used in Sport-X) at the winning post gave direction to the blind runners. Groups competed, as well as individuals, with points for places, and some little decorations of raffia, wool, etc. awarded at the "prize-giving" were the signal for applause.

We had learnt to realise that blindness, partial or total, stimulated rather than damped the will to "try it," for in a school where all were handicapped, time could be taken for preliminary canters, and competition was reasonable.

The Choral and Dramatic Society was formed in 1923, its membership being open only to those few who went to bed late enough to meet once a week for an hour or so after supper. For three years Miss Upcott took a leading part as producer, playwright and occasionally, as performer. Starting on the choral side with selections from Gilbert and Sullivan operas, the members afterwards produced several sketches, including "Mary Anne," written for performance at one of our bazaars; and the Society also took The Chorleywood Operetta under its wing.

From 1926 for eight years, our neighbour Mrs. Chappell took charge. We had much enjoyed Mrs. Chappell's own singing, and now we found that she had expert knowledge of dramatic work too. She showed the members how to work at their art—whether singing or acting—until it was as good as they could make it. Under her guidance, a series of very varied entertainments was given, starting with carols and folk songs, proceeding to scenes from famous novels and including a dancing melodrama, a nativity play and a burlesque in French. Mrs. Chappell's artistic approach to dramatic work, and her friendly touch in getting it across were fully appreciated by the growing club and by the audiences at its productions. She commented on the helpfulness of the girls' good memories as a compensation for the problems of sight defect. She must have met the difficulty of teaching those with no memory of sight to make effective gestures, such as beckoning, waving the hand and nodding the head, not naturally practised by blind people. It was also necessary for the producer to invent aural cues or other aids for timing actions that would naturally depend on sight.

When Mrs. Chappell left the neighbourhood, the Choral and Dramatic Society found no successor who could aspire to her

quality, and the gap was filled by my own efforts to carry it on and *quantity* became a leading feature! We used to meet (normally only once a week in my room) first to choose a play, and then to discuss various members' attempts to interpret the parts, before final casting. We chose plays whose thought centred more in the speech than in the action. The first two were "The Builders," by Laurence Housman and "The Little Man," by Galsworthy, which gave special opportunities to the girls to use their critical ears to good effect. Progress was made between meetings; a writer in the magazine reports:—

. . . A visitor on entering one of the classrooms at Chorleywood during a free time hour, while this play was being rehearsed, might have been a little bewildered to hear more or less correct imitations of the American drawl, mingled with guttural ejaculations in German, and the wailing of an infant in distress!

During the third term of 1935 the Society occupied more people more ambitiously, as described by "A member of the audience," who also reported on the programme when our members amused themselves by practising the quick change of voice required by one person taking both parts in a duologue.

In the Christmas term a period of intense activity in co-operation with the Crafts' Guild, culminated in an entertainment (unprecedented in the annals of the school) in the form of a slightly abridged version of Barrie's play "A Kiss for Cinderella," with a cast comprising the whole school.

The production was not only ambitious in the size of the cast, but also in the completeness of its costume-effects and stage properties, the most unlikely garments and homely articles, ruthlessly commandeered from the whole establishment, surprisingly proving, upon trial, to be the exact requirements. Even a street scene, complete with lamps and snow-storm, was provided! The whole was exceedingly well cast, and all the players entered fully into the spirit of the play.

Two performances were given; the first, which formed the dress rehearsal, took place at our annual estate party. The second, at which a collection on behalf of the Caldecott Community was taken, was witnessed by an audience of relatives and friends of the school. Both entertainments concluded with a selection of Christmas carols.

In the spring term, the members of the Society invited the rest of the school to a Radio Concert, an entertainment in striking contrast to that of the preceding term, since, as the players were all hidden behind a curtain, the only property required was a loud-speaker from which the various items apparently proceeded.

The programme included popular numbers from the Children's Hour; news items, recitations, songs, sketches: "The 'Ole in the Road," "Boarding House Geometry," by Stephen Leacock, and "The Letter," by G. H. Monk; selections from Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln," and L. Housman's "Victoria Regina," and dramatic readings from Shakespeare's "Henry IV" and "King John."

The fact that the whole performance took place behind the curtain made it possible for each item to be presented by a single member playing several parts. The audience, not realising this, at times experienced great difficulty in their efforts to identify the characters, and were unanimous in their enjoyment of the evening's broadcast

The kindly pen of another spectator reported our biggest effort as follows :—

An exceptionally large audience collected for the Easter term "half-term Saturday." It was very largely the Choral and Dramatic Society's production of "The Lonely Plough," which had drawn so many visitors and there is no doubt whatever as to the enthusiasm it aroused. The Society had certainly set itself a Herculean task ; for, quite apart from staging a production which might well have daunted a more experienced society, they had the far greater difficulty of reducing a novel, which relies largely on long descriptive passages for conveying its atmosphere, to a dramatic form. Add to this a very definite time limit, the absence of any stage properties and even of a real stage, and one has some idea of the obstacles to be surmounted.

That the players succeeded so well, not only in the very vivid presentation of these Cumberland farmers, but also in reproducing to an amazing extent the atmosphere of the book, is due to the untiring efforts of the individual members of the Society, and especially of its President, Miss Monk.

The production itself was something in the nature of an experiment, composed as it was of dramatic scenes, linked together by descriptive passages read by a narrator, and by spoken interludes, in which the actors were not visible. The effect was strengthened by the playing of appropriate music between the scenes.

After describing the drama of the Lugg (a dam built to reclaim valuable land from the sea) involving a conflict of loyalties round which the story is built, and commending the vivid characterisations, she went on :—

. . . Nor must one forget the positive genius of the Effects Producer, who gave us so violent and realistic a storm, that it is a wonder that the audience was not smitten there and then with violent colds !

I think those who took part have all kept lively memories of the preliminaries to this performance. After we had agreed which scenes should be acted in front of the curtain, and which, more wisely, behind it, what linking passages should be read, and how the parts should be cast, there came the lengthy process of dictating these parts for the members to take down in Braille ; for, of course, we did not take ourselves so seriously as to expect Braille copies to be made for us. On this occasion I tried to shorten the process by dictating a number of parts in quick sequence in rotation ! Another time, I used a dictaphone and from it individuals made their own transcriptions, which at once saved time, and made the loss of a Braille copy less devastating, as the dictaphone provided the "repeat." The whole cast took part in producing "effects," using a heavy metal sheet borrowed from Beeson's of Rickmansworth for thunder, and loans from Mrs. Bailey's antique shop, to beautify the cottage interior. That this undertaking ever reached—in the time we gave to it—a standard worth offering even to the the most friendly of audiences was due, I think, to the powers of concentration of the cast. I found that there was normally progress

between rehearsals, rather than back-sliding, and I had no fear of "nerves" interfering on the night. This steady rising to the situation was, of course, not peculiar to the Choral and Dramatic Society, and perhaps resulted from the challenge of their handicap.

The plays described, and others that followed, took place at the back of the hall; the winter garden served as an exit to the green room in the library. There was no raised platform for the stage, so all but the few front rows of the audience had to judge the performance chiefly by what they could hear!

From the autumn of 1939, black-out conditions made the winter garden taboo, except in daylight, so the performances during the war were mostly in the summer. After tackling "The Chinese Lantern," by Laurence Housman, we turned, in the school's twenty-first year, to a series of revivals and then, since day and night sirens made frequent claims upon our attention, we attempted only a few short plays with smaller casts.

Quite early in our history "What about Girl Guides?" was asked by several enthusiasts. But there was something in the "busyness" of this movement that I felt likely to produce superficial results which might be better grounded by crafts and social service practised less self-consciously. And handwork lessons always flourished throughout the school. So we developed a Crafts Guild instead, giving opportunities for becoming skilled in various arts and without the badges, parades and promises of the Guide Movement. In 1925 Miss Day helped us to draw up the constitution of the Crafts Guild, a process in itself of value to those inexperienced in administration. There were several groups, each with its own committee and secretary to draw up the syllabus and write the reports. The first Groups were Domestic Crafts, Entertainments, Games and Country Life, First Aid and Handyman soon following. The possibilities of these groups were endless, much good effort went into them and membership was keen, but of course in the limited time (about an hour a week) Crafts Guild could claim the result was congestion, and a reduction in the number of groups became necessary. Domestic crafts were absorbed into the main school curriculum.

The teaching of needlework and housewifery had been undertaken by the Matron, and was limited to the time she could spare for it, until in 1931 an Assistant Matron, Miss Johnstone, was appointed to develop the work. Cooking, laundry-work, housewifery and needlework secured safe, though small, places in the time-tables of different school groups, and most of our girls had the chance of exploring good ways of attacking these crafts. Later, with Miss Goggin in charge, a cookery class demonstrated its powers by serving a six-course dinner to several of the staff and me, making a gallant effort to keep the good things hot in transit from the handwork-room, where they were cooked, to my room at the farther end of the building. They provided typed menus in French,

floral decorations, and a mannequin parade in the summer frocks they had made. This was a very successful and entertaining experience, but by no means illustrative of our ambition for the class or for our own cuisine !

Later the Guide Movement gradually found a footing in the school. This was chiefly through the enthusiasm of Elaine, who was an active member of a Company in the holidays and worked for some badges during term-time, becoming a First Class Guide in 1931. After she had left, two patrols were formed, under the wing of Post Guides, with a visiting Captain, and in 1940 Elaine became Captain by correspondence. Miss Stoneley's arrival on the staff in 1941 added much zest to the weekly meetings and there were four patrols when in 1943 she took over the Captaincy of the "3rd Chorleywood Company." By the summer of 1944 Elaine was also a member of our staff, and she started a Post Ranger Company which included some senior Chorleywood girls and later became an active Company. A small boarding school does not, to my mind, make a promising setting for this highly organised Movement. My unspoken policy had been to let Guiding within the school live or die according to its own unbolstered vitality and I fear this summary does scant justice to the keenness of those Guides to whom its life was due. It was evidently satisfying to some natures that to them, as Guides, loyalties were defined, efficiencies measured, symbolic badges won, ordered ceremonies practised ; Guiding brought to some the stimulus of competition, the chance of promotion to leadership, and the sense of being a unit in a world-wide organisation, as well as the thrill of donning its uniform, enjoying its games and camping, and comradeship in learning useful crafts. The requirements being clear-cut, a Guide knew just where she stood, whereas in the school as such it was vaguer, standards were felt rather than stated, individuals were, mostly unconsciously, moving forward without visible signposts or awards.

What then were the disciplinary measures of the school as a whole ? We had no set plans for wrong-doers, hoping for an inspiration of the moment to fit the case. Indeed, there was very little to worry about, just a normal amount of "escaping"—being in the wrong place at the wrong time—for which psychologists might well say the rules were more to blame than the offenders. But rooms were few for the great range of ages and activities they had to cater for, hence—planning !

Since appearances mattered in the neighbourhood, hats were normally worn, and also gloves when coats were necessary.

To help freedom of movement and good posture, the lightest link between partners on walks was encouraged ; and to keep out the kind of "softness" that in a school can spread like an infection, signs of it were nipped in the bud, although, of course, active friendliness between any ages was smiled upon.

Elections were held (the staff and the main school voting) for a number of school offices to do with club committees, games, library, magazine, and also to take charge of the property cupboard and music equipment ; and a few other offices were filled without voting. We had no system of prefects to take any general charge of other youngsters' morals, for that seemed likely to detract from the undiscussed, "unlabelled" and un-selfconscious influence that grows between understanding minds of all ages.

As a headmistress I had learnt, too, how tiresome even self-made rules can be, when they are ill-fitting to individual people or occasions, and yet how important is the sense of fairness in a child's upbringing at school, out-valuing the spontaneous spoilings and consolations that have their natural place in family life. When, temporarily, such confidence was lacking, it could generally be restored by direct approach to the source of trouble, and so to the discovery, if there were a misunderstanding, on whose side it lay. To me, this seems an important part of a growing child's training—and indeed of us all : to use sensitiveness as a stimulus to overcoming obstacles, rather than to seek comfort by pretending that they do not exist. The attempt to get wrongs righted, in place of grumbling, was encouraged by the accessibility of the staff, and my own (literally) open door ; in this way reforms might creep in, or simply the realisation of another point of view. Our operetta touched on this theme in one song *The Engine Room* :—

Chorus : There's an engine room at Chorleywood
(And it's not where you think it is !)
There's an engine driver at Chorleywood,
(And he's not who you think he is !)

Go to the room where the draught blows through,
And the door stands open wide,
Rattle your fingers against the wood
And just walk straight inside !

Chorus :

Stand on one foot beside her chair,
And tell her your steam is low ;
You'll hear the clang of the coupling chains,
She'll take you straight in tow.

Chorus :

When you find that the door is shut,
You know there's someone there :
She's got out the tools and the oily rag,
And she's polishing someone's gear.

Chorus :

You've beaten your best, you've smashed a glass,
Or all the world's unkind,
Off you go to the engine room
Where two can speak their mind.

Chorus :

For some years—until time pressed too much—the children slipped in to my study to say goodnight on their way to bed, a "homey" touch I valued. Judith would conjure a couplet charming to the ear; and Peter, the first boy, at age four, introduced manhood: "Are you a headmistress?" "I'm a head boy." The older girls came to my bed-sitting-room upstairs; and generally on a Friday evening I read aloud books chosen to appeal to us all, including the plays of J. M. Barrie and of Laurence Housman, novels of George Eliot and of L. A. G. Strong, and "The Surgeon's Log" (Abraham).

These evenings were times for relaxation. The comfortable room, with its old oak furniture, book-lined wall, brown pile carpet and cosy rugs, was itself welcoming, and the juniors singing from the nearby bathrooms added to the homelike feeling.

This leads me to say how glad I was—and am—that it was Chorleywood College *not* an orphanage that came my way, for these children's parents became the school's friends too; their very diverse homes added much to the personalities that built the school, and their confidence helped the growth of mine. How I admired the courage of Dr. and Mrs. Bairsto in bringing Stella (very delicate after the overwhelming illness—cerebral tumour—that took her sight) to live a child's life while she could; and their personal friendship has extended to others since.

Thoughts of the study and of my upstairs room bring back also those sad times that come inevitably to a headmistress, when bad news from home has to be passed on to a child. For such a small community calamities to relations seemed many; tragic accidents took their toll and illness ended suddenly in death. But I never met hysteria or self pity in the loss; a quiet courage emerged, suggesting a deep-down confidence, making possible the attitude Maude Royden has commended as "acceptance" for suffering that is inevitable. The same quality we found also in the children's reaction to their blindness. Resignation, if remedies are possible, is quite another matter—and this quality was not cultivated at Chorleywood!

The rest of this chapter is a review of the school of the pre-war period by Miss Jean McEwan, whom we welcomed on to the staff in 1933. She writes:—

It was on a blazing day in late June that I first crossed Chorleywood Common, trying out, one after another, the white dusty pathways which ran between towering clumps of golden-crowned gorse; and it was not without having had to ask my way that I eventually came to the long tree-shaded avenue which leads from the lodge gates to The Cedars, set with its lawns on a rising curve of ground, the majestic trees, which give the house its name, guarding it like sentinels. Its spaciousness and well-ordered appearance pleased me, the coolness and freshness of its long corridor delighted me after the wearisome journey south, and the unaccustomed heat of the common.

I had my first interview with the headmistress, and lunch at the staff table in the dining hall; on adjourning to the staff-room, I had my first explanation of Braille from Miss Cunningham. The beauty of

this compact and incredibly simple system of raised dots made no impression whatever upon my mind at the time. That was not to come until later, when I sat down to the task of learning for my own use in school a new medium for the transmission of knowledge. But there was one thing of which I did become suddenly aware: I saw, with a flash of comprehension, that there was no slowing down of mental processes because non-visual methods of education had here to be adopted. In fact they were quickened, for the child without sight is not troubled by the many distractions which catch the eye of the "sighted" child.

I remember in particular listening to a lesson with the A's, at that time studying for the School Certificate examination, to take place in a few weeks' time. The room was cool and airy; the French windows stood open to the three lawns. The large Braille volumes open on the desks, the quick movement of the fingers over each line of Braille, the swish of the finger-tips across the page, when passing rapidly from the end of a line to the beginning of the next, the reading of the text which seemed to flow with such ease; this whole atmosphere of concentration impressed me.

I had also been quite startled by Doris, my young guide from the Middle School, who conducted me so swiftly from the B's classroom, in the middle of the long corridor, to where the A's classroom opened from the hall. She had rounded the corner into the hall without a moment's hesitation, at a point where one false step would have meant an extremely noisy and possibly painful collision with the large wooden stand on which the dinner gong was slung. I was very much impressed with this precision of movement. I had yet to learn that this was a very ordinary performance indeed where Doris was concerned; and one of my most vivid memories of preparations for half-term is of seeing her, a chair under each arm, racing down the oak stairs at a pace that I would never dare to emulate, and making her way rapidly from the bottom of the stairs by two impeccable right-angled turns into the hall, where the chairs were being collected for the afternoon's concert.

The third memory that I retain of this first visit to The Cedars is of two of the youngsters playing some imaginative game on the three lawns, as they sat in a wooden box with a densely populated dolls' pram beside them. So like any other children; so completely usual.

When I came to Chorleywood College, for my first term in 1933, as Mistress of French, I found that I was entering a school which, young as it was, had already grown from the experimental and intimate stage of its first years into an established form. The school's work had been recognised as efficient by the Board of Education and academic success had come its way. Various activities too had become a feature of the school's life, among them a Social Service Group, a venture which showed, as the first secretary of the group put it, in her report of its work, that "Our Ship had got safely into the ocean and could now help others through their difficult stages." The group had two spheres of interest: the National Children's Homes at Harpenden, for whose benefit a Sunday evening hand-work party was formed to knit childrens' garments and make soft toys; and at home the almshouses, on the edge of the common near the school. For the old ladies who lived there, volunteers searched the hidden ways of the shrubbery to collect wood to deliver weekly, and many an adventure took place in the search, for the shrubbery paths were completely haphazard and landmarks were few. In later years The Wood Gatherer's Song was written (to the tune of John Peel) for the encouragement of the wood-gatherers, which I quote, as it gives as vivid a picture as any of the task.

Do you know Chorleywood with its cedar trees,
 Monkey puzzler, oak, elm and many more like these ?
 Yes, I know Chorleywood when I'm scrambling on my knees,
 Getting Social Service bundles in the morning.

Chorus : O touch wood, O touch wood,
 Wood, wood, would be got,
 O touch wood, O touch wood,
 You wood-gathering lot.
 O touch wood, touch wood.
 Keep the Tally to the Tot
 When you go Chorleywooding in the morning !

Yes, I know Chorleywood when it's sopping on the ground,
 And I know Chorleywood when I'm hunting like a hound,
 Yes, I know Chorleywood when that Chorley wood is bound
 Into Social Service bundles in the morning.

Chorus :

There is wood in Chorleywood which is snappy as a joker,
 There is wood in Chorleywood which is stiff as any poker,
 And I may be a young lady, but I'm feeling like a stoker,
 When I'm ramming up the bundles in the morning.

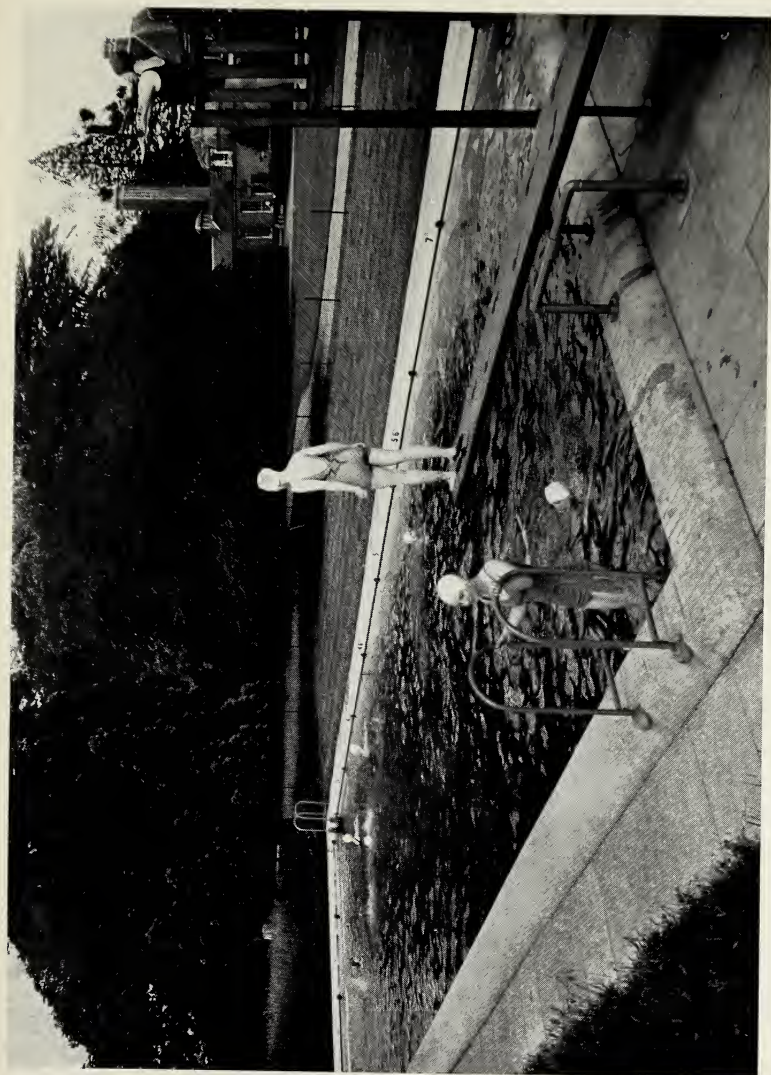
Chorus :

You go left, I'll go right, I'll go under, you go through,
 And if we never meet again just tell them I was true
 To my promise I would gather, be the weather black or blue,
 When we gather for the gathering in the morning.

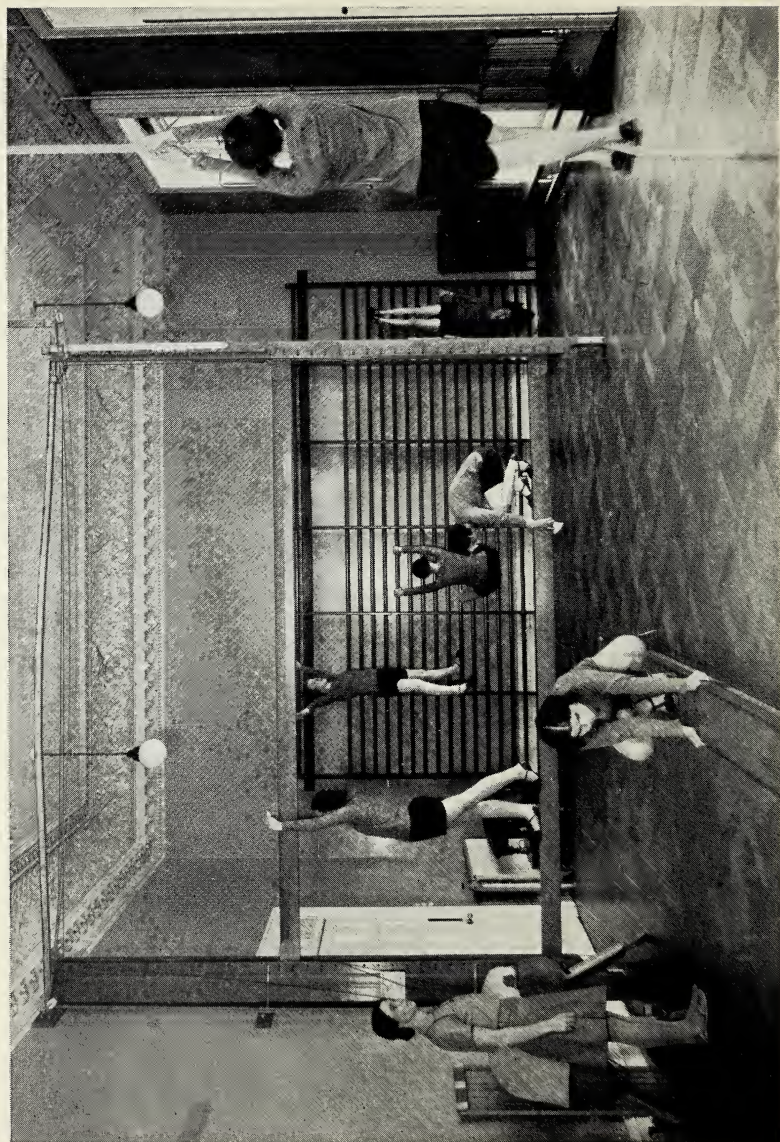
Chorus :

It was not long before I became conscious of the rhythm of the school's life. There was the rhythm of the day, marked by bells and gong ; the rising bell, followed by the patter of feet in dormitories and along corridors for the filling of the hot water cans, for " temperatures " and eye hygiene to the Matron's lobby ; the bell for morning prayers in the hall ; then to breakfast ; after which a general mounting to dormitories to make beds and tidy cubicles, and thence into the garden till the roof bell summoned to classes. The roof bell was operated by a rope which dangled half-way down the long main corridor and was used only when the school was scattered in various parts of the grounds ; it brought in the youngsters from the three lawns, the wood-gatherers from the wilds of the shrubbery, the poultry-keepers from their chickens, and the others from their sauntering in the long avenue or about the lawn, where they saw and swing stood.

The larger rhythm of the week showed the school at work and at leisure. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays were normal lesson and Prep. working days, and lessons were also given on the mornings of Wednesdays and Saturdays. Wednesday afternoons were allocated to the Crafts Guild's varied interests and also had time devoted to form business, or to a period for topical news, or to a series of talks on subjects of general interest. On Saturday afternoons we walked, providing, for the stalwart, the long walk which covered miles, its hardy members crossing fields that were deep in plashy mud or hidden under swishing grasses, balancing themselves on stiles, dodging branches in the woodlands and returning, with the spoils of the countryside in their arms, more or less in time for tea. For the juniors, and those of the seniors who preferred it, there was a shorter walk which trooped its way across the common to the village. This was the shopping expedition, to buy the odds and ends essential to neat and



THE SWIMMING POOL (1936)



A GYM. CLASS

tidy living, shoe-laces, cakes of soap, packets of pins, as well as the odds and ends completely unessential to any living except a child's fantasy. After tea, came the junior school's Saturday night party, when school uniform was discarded and party dresses were worn. It was a real party with games and dances of a most energetic nature, the polka being first favourite, if I remember correctly. Partners who had no sight danced for the most part with those who had some sight, though now and again some merriment and a few bumps would ensue when two would attempt the polka without really knowing where they were going. This noisy interlude drew to a close with the juniors' supper and bedtime, and the later evening was the seniors' own affair.

Sunday brought the week-end to a close. In the mornings, the school was divided into parties for church. The afternoons were devoted to a period of silent reading and letter writing. In the evenings, there was the Social Service handwork party and evening prayers in the Hall.

The terms, too, had their own characteristics and their own rhythm of domestic festivals some fixed, some moveable. The autumn term, the settling-in term, went on steadily until half-term was over, after which followed a spate of parties: the Hallowe'en party, for which the great Spanish chestnut by the chicken-houses produced an ample contribution of nuts; the estate party and concert, held in the hall, which was decorated with holly from the shrubbery, a party from which the ladies departed with lavender bags and the gentlemen with packets of cigarettes in gaily decorated paper: and the school's own Christmas party followed by carol-singing when even the tiniest could choose a favourite carol for the whole school to sing.

The spring term began very jovially with the School's birthday party on the 19th January. It seemed no time at all till February the 6th., Miss Monk's birthday. The actual anniversary was a day for clusters of children at the open door of the headmistress's room and for the proffering of flowers in bouquets or pots following on surreptitious visits to Mr. Stacey. The birthday programme of entertainment which, by tradition, had to be original, followed on a convenient day, the Wednesday or Saturday of the same week perhaps. I always enjoyed these birthday programmes. They were so spontaneous, so representative of the various imaginative levels of the children, at times very revealing, and always full of a genuine tribute to Miss Monk.

The summer term really was a pleasant term, though it was long and ended with school and external examinations, usually in blistering heat in July.

The school put in some very steady work in the summer term until its routine was broken into by the half-term visitors' day, to which, in the summer, many friends in the neighbourhood as well as parents and their friends were invited. People began to gather in the early afternoon and roamed over the grounds with the children, following the will-o'-the-wisp clues of a treasure hunt. When the weather permitted, which it usually did, tea was set on small tables under the cedar trees whose warm scent perfumed the whole area round the lily pond where they stood. After tea, the guests strolled across the Three Lawns and through open French windows to the hall, where the concert of musical and sometimes dramatic items were given. Sometimes too a demonstration of country dancing was given on the lawns, and in later years, when the school had acquired its swimming pool, the swimming display made a very effective entertainment.

It was after this, and after the half-term excursions and picnics, that staff and children settled to the final and immediate preparation for examinations, with their accompanying examination weather. There were usually candidates for the School Certificate and, when the

time came, such were set apart either in the seclusion of Miss Monk's own sitting room on the first floor, or, when numbers were more than could be accommodated there, in the library which was also reasonably free from the noise of the school going about its daily business. For this examination, inkprint copies of the papers were sent by the Local Examinations Delegacy to the National Institute of the Blind, where they were immediately Brailled and despatched to reach Chorleywood the next morning. In 1933 the Delegacy had agreed to a very helpful concession of 50 per cent extra time in mathematics and 20 per cent in subjects other than mathematics, to compensate blind candidates for the slowing down necessitated by the processes involved. In translation, for example, which is a process requiring a good deal of referring back and forward, fingers do not find the place so swiftly as the eye in inkprint. Similarly, referring to one's own previous work is a slower process for a candidate using Braille than for one with sight, while writing directions for corrections or additions requires considerably more time than in sighted work. When finished, each candidate's paper was transcribed by a senior member of the staff and both the transcribed ink copy and the original Braille answers were despatched at once to the Delegacy.

The school's own examinations followed hard on the external one and even impinged on the later stages of it. For this important occasion a quite unsuspected door between the middle and upper school classrooms was opened up and the invigilating member of staff sat in this passage way, with the whole school, with the exception of the most junior, arranged around her. Invigilating in examination weather was quite pleasant. The French windows stood open, but the light blinds of the other windows were drawn to keep out the heat. When the thunder of Stainsbys and the patter of prodding ceased for a moment, summer sounds would come floating in—the hum of bees on exploration from the garden hives, the buzz of less reputable insects, the sharp tap of the woodpecker on the tree by the wireless studies, the call of rooks and doves in the trees of the shrubbery.

This was a busy season for the staff, invigilating, transcribing external papers, correcting school papers, writing school reports; when Miss Cunningham's services were in very great demand, for it was a very welcome saving of eyesight to have someone at hand who would read out by touch the Braille essays, translations, literary criticisms and history and geography answers in a score of middle school papers. Two Old Girl graduates, Barbara Watson-Taylor and Hazel Winter, also used to give valuable help in this way.

The summer term ended in a whirl. There was a Country Dance Party and a Swimming Gala; there was Miss Deavin's picnic with her form; there was the last picnic supper with Miss Monk; there was an even greater and more thorough clearing of desks than at the end of the preceding terms. After tidying, came the last musical performances of the year, when all the school assembled in the hall, and each one when called upon played a piece of music (recently learnt) before her school-mates and her headmistress. The rest of the day went swiftly and the next morning saw the school depart on its long summer holiday.

The children's half-term excursions deserve more than a casual mention, for they fulfilled a definite purpose. They were enjoyable and educative as well. There was something planned to suit the junior school, and something for the senior school. The Children's Theatre, Peter Pan, Hiawatha (as a pageant, with Coleridge-Taylor's music, at the Albert Hall), various Gilbert and Sullivan operas, give an idea of what the winter and spring terms provided for the younger members of the school. For the seniors, Shakespeare at the Old Vic

was always popular, and once a performance of *The Tempest* at the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park was added to the joys of the summer outing. The Upper school also heard Ruth Draper's inimitable one person sketches during one of her periodic visits to London, and from time to time made full use of Watford productions of plays. Every autumn too, the school could rely on the very kind donation, by Miss Irene Hett, of tickets to the Ranyard Mission concert in the Wigmore Hall.

The summer term naturally gave more opportunity for travel, and picnic excursions were a feature of the summer half-term: by coach to Ivinghoe Beacon, for example, to have lunch and either lie peacefully on the warm ridge in the sun or to scramble up and down the escarpment; to Ashridge Park to find a sizeable fallen tree trunk to sit on and eat a packed meal among the whispering leaves of overhanging boughs. The picnic was not the end of such excursions: there was always something which was very properly added to provide an aim beyond such "*dolce far niente*." From Ivinghoe, for instance, the coach took the party to see the Zoo at Whipsnade; from Ashridge to the Farmhouse School at Wendover Dene to see over its farm tended by the children.

Many of the excursions were very specially planned to give the children the sort of general knowledge which a child with sight can gain from "prowling." Such were the visits to museums and to places of local interest. At the museums of Aylesbury and Tring, the school was known and always prepared for. Objects of interest were brought from their cases for the children to handle, a privilege which was thoroughly appreciated. There were several places of interest near at hand. Milton's Cottage, five miles over the fields at Chalfont St. Giles, was one of the spring excursions. Jordans and its Quaker Meeting House was visited, while St. Albans with its venerable cathedral and ancient Roman villas was one of the features of a day which finished up with a hospitable tea and evening with the school's old friends, St. Albans High School. The school also visited Windsor twice, once in the summer of 1929 when a launch on the river proved very popular, memories of which no doubt caused the repeat performance in the summer of 1938. Between these two visits, the river saw the school at Greenwich, whither the children went by steamer in 1933, and inspected the Painted Hall, Museum and Meridian.

London sightseeing proper made a small beginning in 1931 when the school made a motor coach tour of the city, including visits to Westminster Abbey, the Temple, Grays Inn, and St. Etheldreda's and St. Bartholomew's churches. The autumn term of the same year contented itself with such topical events as the Faraday Centenary Exhibition at the Albert Hall, the Dairy Show at the Agricultural Hall, and a visit to the Natural History and Science Museum at Kensington. It was not until the spring of 1936 that the London acquaintance was renewed with a visit to the Tower, to be followed in the autumn by a visit to the Houses of Parliament, conducted by the member for Hertfordshire, Sir Dennis Herbert, as he was at that time; while the spring of 1937 saw the school at the Guildhall, St. Paul's, and the Mansion House, where the children were entertained to tea. The autumn term completed the London explorations very fittingly with a visit to the Abbey at Westminster.

In the same term, there were visits paid to the National Library for the Blind, from which so many Braille books in their canvas bags came the way of The Cedars; and to Broadcasting House which, though not generally open to schools, very kindly made an exception for a group of our seniors on the special instance of Sir Ian Fraser. These last visits, had not the war intervened, might have proved the

germ of a new sort of half-term excursion, covering more recent developments in our national life.

It is difficult to realise how thoroughly and intimately a child without sight must examine an object in order to form any accurate mental idea of its shape and texture. Miss Monk always wrote to places of exhibition beforehand, asking for specimens to be laid out for the children to handle, but naturally enough the few specimens and the many children gave rise to impromptu explorations on more than one occasion. I remember especially the visit to the Tower where the custodians of that magnificent collection of armour had carefully wiped the oil, which preserves the metal, from several specimens of weapons and mail, and had laid these out for our inspection. But the excitement of the children, in this treasure house of mediæval panoply, was more than could be satisfied with the cleansed models that had been prepared for us, and I shall never forget the sight of the oily but contented fingers which followed the generous curves of Henry VIII's ever-expanding series of suits of armour, and wonderingly examined, in the room of the knights on horseback, each mail-clad figure. When once they saw that we preferred to be dirty and satisfied than clean but turned away spiritually empty, the custodians stood back and let the swarm of eager fingers have their own way.

Before going on to the more outstanding events and developments in the school's history I should like to say something more of the Wednesday afternoon employments of the Crafts Guild, the work of which fell into three sections: Country Life, Emergency Knowledge and Entertainments.

Country Life included all that I used to know as nature knowledge. It was a very popular section and made great strides, from its early days when walkers brought in their findings to display in the library, to the days when competitions were arranged for the identification of wild flowers, the arranging of them in vases, the making of miniature gardens, and the imitation of bird songs; when talks about the trees of the estate and conducted tours of the grounds were given by Mr. Stacey, and when lectures on wild life and insects culminated in the formation of an aquarium on the marble topped table in the porch.

The Emergency Knowledge group covered First Aid, Handyman, Interpreters. The Handyman group fell heir to all the odd jobs of the school; they learned how to pack parcels and books, rubbed lavender for the Estate party's lavender bags, tidied cupboards, and could be seen carefully threading their way to the music rooms with a rag and a saucer of milk to clean piano keys. The Interpreters had, as their sphere of work, the learning of the manual alphabet, Morse and Moon type.

The activities of a Wednesday afternoon would not be complete without the mention of square handwriting, which is written with a sharp pencil on typing paper, clipped to a stiff grooved cardboard. This was quite a useful way of communicating with sighted people who knew no Braille. The school practised it nobly for many a term.

Braille reading aloud was also practised very steadily at one time, when the children went to the Reading Competition organised by the National Library for the Blind in London, in 1934. Chorleywood returned with two prize winners among its numbers.

With such varied activities and calls on the attention it seems rather amazing now that so much solid work was done as well. But term after term came round and year after year, and the magazine modestly tucked away in its back pages an every-increasing record of the successes won by past and present pupils.

Such was the rhythm of the year, a steady rhythm broken only by some external happening or by some new feature which was to enter,

in its turn, into the life of the school, witnessing to that growth and change which are the marks of the living organism.

One such external event was the fire at Sunshine House, the Home for Blind Babies at the other side of the common. The fire happened on the afternoon of Sunday, September 30th, 1928, and the school was not long in being made aware that something unusual was taking place, an idea of which may be gained from a magazine article of that year, written by Miss Deavin:

"It was about 4 p.m. on September 30th that the peace of a Sunday afternoon was interrupted by news of a fire at Sunshine House and by half-past five the first consignment of babies had arrived at The Cedars. Never before had the Common Room such an appearance of "Open House." People known and unknown, local residents and passing motorists, tramped in with their loads of cots, clothes, perambulators and babies: while the latter, unexpectedly dumped in new and strange surroundings, evinced their interest in the whole proceeding by setting forth, with great determination, to explore their new quarters and companions. By 8 p.m. a marvellous transformation had been effected in the hall, which presented the appearance of a ward of long standing, complete with twenty-one cots and their occupants. Then came the telephone—and reporters! By Monday the double ménage was highly organised and in full swing. The B's had departed to the wings, leaving their classroom to the kindergarten; the common room had become a playroom, the winter garden a dumping ground and a surgery, while the nursing staff had made the library their headquarters. The weather was kind during the month's visit and the rows of stretchers on the lawn during the after-dinner nap soon became very familiar: as did also the sounds of the jazz band which performed on the gravel path!

The final departure to Devon was as thorough-going as the arrival. Pantehnicon and char-à-banc had soon "left not a wrack behind," except the memory of an event so precipitous as to appear unreal in retrospect."

The storms of 1929-1930 which swept the country did not leave the cedars untouched. Two of the cedar trees, as well as sixteen other trees in the grounds, fell in one night. Of the two great cedars only stumps remained, which I remember, as standing near the lily pool, bearing a great burden of creeper in places of their former glories. The crevices and holes in the trunk were enticing enough and I can remember very vividly the nest of young water wagtails that flourished there one spring with little grey fuzzy heads like very young French poodles.

Several new features developed in the life of the school in the 'thirties.

There was, notably, in 1931 the celebration of the school's tenth birthday by a reunion of its modest number of old girls. The reunion was held just at the end of the summer term, and proved a wonderful success. Reunions of people who have shared the intimacies of living together have a value that transcends the most purposeful conference, and from the seed of this joyous first reunion there flowered in later years the Old Girls' Association, formed at the next reunion, in July, 1936, fifteen years after the founding of the school.

In the magazine of 1931-32 there is to be found a paragraph of portent. "During the spring term, Miss Pope was absent from the school, an absence since rectified by her return in company with new typewriters and a set of business desks calculated to quicken the editorial pulse." And indeed not only the editorial pulses must have quickened. The first typing study was set up in the room at the end of the stationery cupboard passage, and from the time of its modest

but thoroughly business-like beginning, the secretarial section has flourished exceedingly. The typewriters and desks were moved later on to their present quarters in the special room built for them at the garden side of the entrance hall. Business equipment has been added to by six Braille shorthand machines and stacks of paper rolls to feed their voracious appetite. In 1937 the school acquired a Gestetner duplicating machine, and this piece of equipment, with great zeal and with great success as well, produced the school magazine for several ensuing years. For a short period, too, in the same year, a dictaphone which had been loaned, was in great demand, mostly for serious purposes. But, as it had to be used from time to time for practice, the results were occasionally somewhat frivolous. The editor at least makes mention, in the magazine of that year, of a one-voice duet, produced apparently by singing the two parts to the same cylinder. The secretarial career is one that was well represented in the list of news of Old Girls and their doings, and the school has quite accepted secretarial training as one of the branches of its curriculum.

This was a period too of development of the physical side of the school education. The hall, already equipped as a gymnasium, acquired a new boom, and the children were fitted out with a new type of uniform. The new uniform was displayed at the Old Girls' Reunion of 1936, and caused great interest, and apparently some envy, among those whose lot it had been "to dance in petticoats and stockings and brown silk dresses of seemly lengths, instead of being clad in the delightful freedom of bare legs and arms, and a comparative wisp of a thing in tawny crepe." The new uniform involved three different changes. There was the uniform proper, which was now made of a firmly woven material to a new pattern: gored skirt, fitted bodice, round neck with madder piping; there was the new gym pullover, made of finely woven jersey dyed a deep madder, which was worn over brown knickers and gave a wonderful freedom of movement. Finally there was the "wisp of tawny crepe," which was worn for free dancing, and which for all the epithet of wisp which was attached to it, was roomy, if short, being gathered very full at the shoulders with ample folds flowing to the knee and caught at the waist with a girdle. The brown blazers, which had replaced the jerseys of the first few years, remained the utility garment, adorned by the emblematic badge depicting sunrise behind a cedar.

New desks had also been acquired, designed to make a correct sitting posture easier, and to improve the space available for books—for the first essential for a user of Braille is space and plenty of it. Braille books are no pocket editions, and when, besides, room must be found for a writing frame and a supply of manilla paper, as well as type boards for arithmetic, it will be realised that a broad-topped desk is essential. For comfortable sitting also there must be ample room for knees underneath. The new desks were so designed as to provide a table with no shelf underneath on the left hand, but with a commodious allowance of shelving for apparatus, paper and books on the right hand.

Undoubtedly the major event in the physical training of the school was the opening of the new swimming pool in 1935, and whereas before there had been only the possibility of a hurried visit to the river baths at Rickmansworth, there was now permanently at the front door a unique and most modern pool to be used as and when the school chose. I do not think I could do better than quote the account of this event by Joan Woodcraft, from the school magazine for the year.

"It was towards the end of the summer term before last that I first caught the rumour of it—a swimming pool in our own garden! No more hasty dips in the crowded bath at Rickmansworth, and then the scramble to get dressed quickly, and the rush to catch

the 'bus back to school, but a bathe every day, and in small groups so that it would no longer be impossible to do more than two or three strokes before encountering someone else. But all that, as I have said, was rumoured more than a year ago. Winter came, and with it the busy days of preparation for the Fête and, later on, for Christmas, and so dreams of the baths were for a while forgotten. When spring came again, questioning eyes were turned on the front meadow. What excitement, when a man was seen to take measurements and to plant some stakes in the ground! "That's to be the site for it," so it was whispered; but the stakes were drawn out again and we went home leaving the old front meadow quite unchanged. We had been told, it is true, that we were certainly to have the pool, but we yearned for more material proofs of its coming.

It was early in May when we returned to school, and what rejoicings! Business at last! A Big Hole! (What is a swimming pool if it is not a big hole with water poured in it?). During the first half of the term, rain water poured in so heavily that it was necessary to pump it out! As the weeks slipped by, we had constantly fresh causes of delight—the concreting was finished for a bath 75 ft. by 28 ft., with a seven foot depth in the deepest part, sloping to 3 ft. in the shallow end. A spring board and a high diving board were erected, a shower bath installed; so, fresh and thrilling discoveries were made and spread through the school at the speed at which good news alone can travel..

It was almost the end of June before the weather turned warm, and in those first warm days we heard the delicious truth that the water was running in. For more than three days and nights the bath was filling, but it will seldom be necessary to repeat this process, for the bath is completely equipped with a filtration and ozone purification plant. Ozone is the most modern method of cleansing pools, it entirely purifies the water, and gives it a most inviting clear blue colour, and above all, leaves it free from any tickling or tasty chemicals, so that even a splutter is not so bad as it might be.

The ceremony for opening the pool took place on July 1st, and was performed by Lady Hampden, who was introduced by Sir Beachcroft Towse. When she had cut the ribbon which stretched across the shallow end, and so removed the last frail barrier, two Old Girls dived from the diving boards, and two representatives from the present school jumped in from the side, to be the first to enjoy the great gift. Other speakers were Lt.-Col. Crane and Lord Hampden and thanks to the N.I.B. and the Gardner's Trust for the gift of the pool, and to Lady Hampden, were proposed and seconded by Miss Monk and Ruth Hitchcock, while a bouquet of flowers made by Mabel Judd, was presented to the Viscountess by our youngest, Sheila Jennens; and the school added its thanks by singing the school song. After the speeches, for which a microphone and loud speaker were provided, a display was given by the members of Mermaids' Swimming Club of skilful and exquisitely graceful aquatic feats. Following this, we pupils then demonstrated hand-work and specially adapted apparatus in the school, which was open for visitors' inspection, and after tea there was country dancing and singing on the lawn.

The rest of the story is simply one of delightful enjoyment. We started right away that very evening, and finished a good day with a perfect dip. For the rest of the term we were able to bathe every day, and the wiry ones took advantage of the warmer days at the beginning of the autumn term. No more, as in the old days at Rickmansworth, will the shallow end be a seething

mass, crowded with the arms and legs of those who were stuck at the "One foot on the bottom" stage, while round the edge were the bobbing heads of the little ones who were too small to leave go of the rail in such a crowd. Already almost everyone can swim at least a few strokes, while most may be termed swimmers, and some, quite accomplished swimmers. At the end of the summer term we made our first humble attempt at display; that simply means that everyone showed off to everyone else her noblest effort! Some displayed swift and strong breast stroke, some floating, back stroke, dog paddle, and some made a not very successful attempt at singing a round while swimming.

And here I must stop in my story of the pool, but not because the tale is at an end; year by year it will have more and more to tell, for now no hope is too ambitious for the Chorleywood swimmer, with all the advantages that the wonderful gift has put within our reach.

The Sports reports in the magazines from 1935 onwards bears ample witness to the progress made by the school in its swimming.

During these years, too, the school was creating for itself an ever-widening circle of acquaintances and friends. Contacts grew in various ways.

There was for example a very happy connection with the Watford Peace Memorial Hospital which had taken several of the children in at moments of stress and had restored them, less appendix, in a smiling and comfortable condition. The friendship was further cemented and the school's gratitude shown in no uncertain way, when a Fête was organised in October of 1934, which, with the generous help of the neighbourhood, realised the sum of £160 to be handed over to the Hospital's Extension Fund.

Sport-X matches gave an opportunity for meeting several other schools. There was on the visiting list from early years St. Alban's High School, Wycombe Abbey School, the Harrow County School and Blackheath High School (Miss Monk's old school) and the range of acquaintances increased later by matches with the Royal Masonic (lately settled nearby at Rickmansworth), the Rachel McMillan Training College where one of the Old Girls was training, the Aldwick Campers as a follow-up of the first two Chorleywood campers at a Federation of University Women's Camp for Schoolgirls, Croham Hurst (Miss McConnell's and Miss Biscoe's old school), and Brondesbury and Kilburn High School. By 1934 it had been possible to form a junior team which had its own matches with Portsdown Lodge Preparatory School, with St. Joan of Arc's Convent school at Rickmansworth, with Heronsfield School, as well as with our old friends St. Alban's High School.

The Aldwick Camp which I have already mentioned afforded another way of contacting other schoolgirls. The first experiment was made in 1935 when Doris John and Marjorie Wood (Minor) went to this Camp for Schoolgirls, organised by the Federation of University Women, which they found so enjoyable that they not merely arranged for another holiday on the same lines, but also encouraged various other members of the school to do likewise, thus stabilising Holiday Camps as a tradition. In 1936 Chorleywood girls joined three different Girl Guide Camps, as well as a second F.U.W. camp. By 1937 the school found itself as far afield as a Barn Camp in Ireland, where the five girls who went there met as their chaplain one who was later to become the school's second headmistress.

The result of all these activities was not merely that the children acquired more and more social contacts, but also that the work of the school became known to an increasing circle of people. It was good for the outside world to know the special methods by which children without sight read, write, do arithmetic, to be made aware that they learn languages, have skill in arts and crafts, swimming and country dancing, and are familiar with the code of behaviour commonly accepted among well-trained schoolgirls.

To make the school's work known to the outside world had always been a recognised policy, and in addition to the general dissemination of knowledge which resulted from such contacts as have been described above, there were from time to time official demonstrations of the school's work, by special invitation, to members of the public who might have a particular interest in the work. In 1928, the Southern Branch of the College of the Teachers of the Blind had met in Chorleywood and had been shown the new school's ways and methods. In 1929 the National Institute for the Blind and friends had been invited to see that eight years of existence had accomplished much. From that time until 1937 there was a lull in such official activity, though there were always individual visitors in sufficient numbers to warrant a V for Visitors in the Alphabet of the day. In 1937 a special demonstration was staged for friends in the medical profession and in blind organisations, as well as for people whom the school had contacted and knew to be interested in its special methods. There were sixty visitors. Pupils were from the various sections of the school and specimen classes were conducted in the hall. In the following year, advantage was taken of the Conference of Headmistresses at Rickmansworth to invite members of the Conference to an At Home at which demonstrations of the use of the school's special apparatus and of physical training methods were given, the whole completed with one of Miss Campbell's excellent musical programmes. The Editor of the Magazine, commenting on this occasion, admirably shows the constant aim of such demonstrations, and between the lines, one can read how very necessary were such continual endeavours to show the practicability of the school's methods:—

"About a hundred and fifty headmistresses from the Headmistresses' Conference, which was held at the Masonic School, Rickmansworth, visited us for an "At Home" on June 11th. It was something of a vision, emanating of course from our own headmistress to undertake the acquaintance of that august body with us as a working reality. A later article in these pages testifies to the vision's capture. Braille methods were explained and illustrated, and it was admirable to watch Miss Deavin's ability in getting them "across" to an audience, sympathetic but of necessity needing to be assured that Braille can be a real "medium of exchange" in the wealth of learning. We feel that a contact between Chorleywood College and other schools was made here which will never be lost."

It is easy to see that the period covered, 1928-1938, shows a great expanding effort on the part of the school. The strong, yet sensitive tendrils of the growing plant grasped every useful support and flourished exceedingly, and it seems now, on looking back, that it was only fitting that such a flowering should take place in the epoch which itself came to fruition with the national festival of the King's Jubilee. This day, May 6th, 1935, was a day to be especially remembered in the annals of the school, because The Cedars was chosen as the centre of the local festivities. There was great excitement as marquees were erected on the Three Lawns, swings and roundabouts and coconut shies by the Lily Pond, and a maypole on the see-saw lawn. A procession was

formed in the early afternoon in Chorleywood village and in the blazing sunshine of the phenomenally summerlike day, the long trail of decorated vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians in fancy dress, came round the Common and up the avenue. Miss Monk's Morris-Cowley, by the skilful use of brown paper and cardboard and festoons of bright coloured flowers had been converted into that famous Shoe in which dwelt a certain old woman whose children were too numerous for her peace of mind. Miss Monk, at the wheel, in an old-fashioned print dress and with mob cap and mittens, represented the Old Woman, while a small company of the junior school, also in fancy dress, were packed in at the back as the overflowing family. It was a very happy moment for everyone when it was announced that the car had been judged the best decorated vehicle and that it had gained a prize, a portrait of the King. This now hangs in a place of honour in the library, and by its presence there brings back memories of those years during which he reigned with such dignity and wisdom, and of the brief and joyous outburst of affectionate loyalty in which that reign culminated. It was an era that was drawing to a close, though we did not know it at the time, but the years to come were to show it plainly enough as the school's life, changing with outer conditions, drew itself in during the next decade to the pattern set by war and its over-riding restrictions.

CHAPTER VII

AS EXPERIENCED BY FOUR PUPILS

THIS chapter brings impressions left in the minds of four pupils, each asked to write frankly of her reactions to school life and of her special memories, and to give some account of her experience before coming to Chorleywood College. Two of these contributors are blind and two have some sight, to this extent representing different aspects of the school's influence.

Ruth Hitchcock, a pupil from 1923 to 1935, writes :—

It is not easy to take one's mind back twenty-four years, and to record accurately the impressions made by school when one was only six-and-a-half years old. Many impressions are blurred and dream-like, while others stand out clearly. Very clearly I remember looking forward to the day I was to go to Chorleywood College. I was living, at the time, in a village in West Suffolk, and since my illness, when I was eleven months old—cerebro-spinal meningitis, resulting in loss of sight—I had been delicate, though not actually ailing. My parents had trained me to be as like other children of my age as possible in independence, teaching me to dress myself, find my way about the house and garden, play with, and take care of my toys, and so on. I liked to help in the house, and my parents encouraged me in this, knowing that it was good training for me. The flowers in our garden, and in the meadow at the back of the house, were always a joy to me, and I soon knew each one by its shape and scent. Perhaps my chief delight was the tricycle, on which I was expert at riding. When I was not riding this, I was never more happy than when someone read aloud to me. In time I knew all my books by heart, and I would tell the reader where to turn the page! I could pick out any book by the feel of its cover. Looking back on my early years, I realise how much I was learning without knowing it. I did not play much with other children; I think I felt at a disadvantage with them, though I did not understand why. But I quickly learnt to enjoy this when I went to school.

I had been entered at Chorleywood College, and was to start when I was seven; but during April, 1923, there came a letter from Miss Monk saying that she was forming a new class to which I would belong, and asking if I could start school on May 6th. I remember how delighted I was, though I had never been away from home alone before.

I can still recall my feelings on that first day at school. My first meeting with Miss Monk stands out clearly. I remember thinking how tall she was, that her voice was deeper than any I had yet heard, that she was kind, and seemed to understand when I said I should be much too excited to eat any breakfast the next morning! Incidentally, I quickly learnt to enjoy my food, and put on weight accordingly. I amazed my parents the first time they saw me eat a good meal, and with enjoyment.

I do not remember saying good-bye to my parents, and was not at all homesick, until later in the term. There was not time for tears when there were so many new things to be explored, and new people to meet. It was a real pleasure to me to be with girls of my own age all day. Almost from my first day at school, I selected a child a few months older than myself as my special friend. She had been at

Chorleywood College one or two terms, and so could initiate me into many things, and she mothered me a good deal, too. Our friendship is still a living thing in my life. It was she who, feeling homesick at tea-time on my first or second day, was shedding tears into her cup of milk, and hoping they would not be seen! I was enjoying the rich cold milk when she said, "*We always have Jersey cow milk at home!*"

The school and garden seemed very large to me after our own house and garden. I think I was rather a long time before I found my way at all easily about either; but the staff were most patient and understanding, and even at the time I was grateful for this. The summer of 1923 was a very hot one, and we spent a large part of the day out-of-doors. I remember enjoying meals in the garden, and the warm summer evenings, sitting on the tennis court, with the air full of the scent of syringa, while one of the staff read aloud. I almost always chose reading, rather than games; we were free to do which we preferred.

I was eager to learn to read, and I found the first stages—learning the Braille alphabet by putting nails with big heads into a board to form the letters—enthalling. By the end of the first term I could read a few words in The Infant Temple Reader, and was proud to demonstrate to my parents in the holidays! Nature Study stands out in my mind as always enjoyable and interesting. Part of its attraction was that it was very often out-of-doors. I remember, too, learning to take part in a percussion band, and being given the "clappers," while longing to be promoted to a drum or triangle. I remember wondering why we were taught this, and being unable to come to any conclusion! I enjoyed, too, learning to recite, while finding breathing exercises, and such sentences as "Long and loudly little Lily laughed," most perplexing.

The days seemed to go very quickly in those first terms. They were marked by high lights, such as half-term Saturday, when a parent or friend might take one out; half-term Monday, when the whole school had a day's holiday and outing; end of term, with the excitement of packing, last lessons, and "going-home day."

My favourite term was the Christmas one. This was partly because my birthday came then (a great event when we were small, for it meant presents, and a big birthday cake sent from home, shared with the whole school at tea-time), and because, three days before it, on the last day of October, we kept All Hallow's E'en—an exciting evening with its games; I used to enjoy in particular bobbing for apples in a bath. The end of this term was specially looked forward to because of three events: the estate concert, the fancy-dress dance, and the carol singing. Much preparation went to all three.

The concert was in the nature of a Christmas party, and all who lived on the estate were invited. I think in particular we enjoyed seeing the dear old ladies from the almshouses enjoying themselves. The fancy-dress dance was always on the last Saturday of this term. Costumes were kept very secret, and much planning went on beforehand, with staff in charge of the acting cupboard, or by letter with parents who sent dresses from home. Carol-singing was at first under the staff's bedroom windows early on "Going-home day"; but also for a few years singing in the evenings for a week or so in some of the large houses in Chorleywood, collecting money for the British Legion. Even now I can never hear the carol "See amid the winter's snow," with its very popular descant, without going back in imagination to those cold still evenings, with the reality of Christmas all around.

Events of this kind became part of the tradition of the school, and were soon regarded as such. Each term brought something of this nature to be looked forward to. In the spring term, the great events were the school's birthday on January 19th, and Miss Monk's birthday

on February 6th. At tea-time on January 19th, the tables were arranged in a horseshoe, and as the list was read of all the pupils and members of the staff who had come to the school, we took our places, as our names were read out, in order of arrival, starting at Miss Monk's right hand and working round to her left. After this there was a very good tea, with a home-made iced cake with candles, and a model of a ship on top—symbol of the school. Tea was followed by speeches (always from one of those who had been longest at school, and from one of the newest girls), and finally we sang the school song, before dispersing to continue the lessons of the day. As I grew up, I learnt to see significance in this keeping of the school's birthday—harder to understand when one was small, than the keeping of Miss Monk's birthday the next month. On that occasion we used to produce an original concert for her, usually starting with a Birthday Chorus, often with a very catchy tune, which we found it difficult not to sing about the school—a serious matter when all the items were kept very secret! I remember how I used to feel glad that grown-ups enjoyed birthdays too.

In the summer term there was often a Sports' Day, with races of all kinds. I remember in particular practising for the wheel-barrow race and the three-legged race. But even more than this, we looked forward to the expeditions to the Rickmansworth baths. It was not until my last two years at school that we had our own swimming pool in the grounds. I learnt to swim, and in time was promoted to the deep end, but I never became a diver.

I have not spoken so far of school work, except in the first terms. By the time I was eleven, I had a full curriculum—as full as any child in an ordinary school. I found interest and enjoyment in everything except mathematics, in which I remained weak; my particular interests were languages, literature and scripture. First French, and later Latin, and still later German, were eagerly started, and as their wonderful literatures opened before me, I worked harder to master their intricacies. Learning the piano did not come easily, and the two examinations which I passed (the Lower Division of the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music when I was twelve, and the Higher Division when I was fourteen) were rather an ordeal. But I think it is true to say that I really benefited by the classes in musical appreciation besides enjoying them.

I can only briefly sketch my time in the senior school. It was marked by the passing of the Oxford Local School Certificate with six credits, and an Honours Certificate, when I was sixteen. In the following year I took the Scholarship and Entrance Examination for Girton and Newnham, taking English as a main subject, and French and Latin as subsidiary subjects, and gained a place at Newnham. I remained at school until the end of the school year of 1935, going up to Cambridge in the autumn of that year. My three years at the University were happy and busy ones. Instead of reading English, I was allowed to change to Theology, which I read for the Honours Tripos for those three years. I never regretted this change. One of its attractions was the initiation into two more languages, Greek and Hebrew.

With twelve years of happy school life to look back upon, I feel it a right and duty to tell of what I found in the school to help and influence me both then and now. I have often spoken to people of their school days, and have been told "I never liked school much, and I was glad to leave." I can honestly say that things were quite the opposite with me. It is strange that almost all the people to whom I have just referred had been to day schools. I am sure that a boarding school—though I recognise some drawbacks—has many advantages. There is greater opportunity for making and cementing friendships, and the training in community life is excellent. I owe a real debt to my school in both these respects. I still number among my greatest

friends girls with whom I grew up during those twelve years at Chorleywood College.

Then there was the wider family of the school—small enough for the youngest to know the eldest, and with a common spirit, difficult to describe, but which newcomers soon caught. When I arrived in 1923, there were only twenty-five pupils in the school, which meant that we younger ones saw a good deal of the older girls, without feeling in such awe of them as is often felt in a larger school.

I realise now how wise our training in community life was in one particular point; and for this I can never be grateful enough. In our dealings with one another, and with the staff, we were taught (all unconsciously) to behave naturally, and like seeing people. We never thought of saying or thinking that we were different from other people, or to be pitied; so often since I have left school I have found this self-pity in blind people, spoiling character and influencing independence. Where differences from ordinary schools had to be made, we often felt at an advantage rather than a disadvantage; as in our game of Sport-X where we had the thrill of competing with other schools, and often beating them, and of hearing them say that it was more strenuous than their games!

In such relatively small ways, too, as tidiness, good posture and looking in the right direction when spoken to, our school training has been invaluable to me. I count it the greatest compliment when a friend says to me, "When I am with you I forget you are blind." I know then that I have succeeded in remembering my early training, now become habit. I am convinced that in these ways not only naturalness in behaviour is achieved, but also poise and ease in social contacts.

Here let me add that Ruth Hitchcock gained a College Scholarship at the end of her first year at Newnham, and later the Mary Ewart Scholarship. She gained a First Class in the Preliminary Examination of the Theological Tripos; in 1937, a First Class in Part I and in 1938 a First Class in Part IB, completing the B.A. Hons. Degree. Yes; her academic successes and the fullness of her University life were satisfying to all who had watched Ruth's growing powers. The picture of her that comes first to my mind is of the seven-year-old reciting "The Wind" with clarity and zest. I quote these verses from "Dreamland Shores" (by Norman Ault) as this book was the source of pleasure to many of our youngsters and many half-term audiences and deserves a place in this story:

The wind and I, old friends are we;
And when at night I lie in bed,
He sometimes comes and calls for me
To play with him instead.

Last night I heard him in the lane,
I heard his rustling feet draw near;
He rattled on the window pane,
And called that I might hear.

But when I answered with a snore,
He got as cross as he could be:
He shook the door three times or four,
He shook it angrily.

And then he rushed away, and leapt
Upon the roof above my head ;
And down the chimney dark he crept
And came up to my bed.

He came, and breathed upon my cheek,
I felt his breath—it was so cold ;
I shut my eyes and would not speak,
Then he began to scold.

He burst the window open wide,
And flung my clothes upon the floor ;
He pushed the curtains on one side,
And banged the nursery door.

Nurse heard the noise and came at last,
And sent the cross old wind away.
And then I went to sleep so fast
I heard no more till day.

From such early conquests of her mother tongue emerged—under the cherishing influence of Newnham's dons and fellow students—the first woman to gain the double First in Theology.

Dorothy Griesinger (*née* Henwood) gives an account of experiences at Chorleywood College from a different angle, for she came to the school in 1924 when fifteen years old, and when wearing glasses seemed to see everything.

All my life I have been very short-sighted, but as so often happens in such cases, I loved always to read and read, in sunshine, in gloom, by the flickering light of the fire in an ancient chimney corner, by candle light surreptitiously, when supposedly asleep ; always, anywhere and anything I read. I decided very early that my work was to teach, and I kept this goal in view when at the age of eleven I moved from the village school to the high school of the county in which I lived.

Up to this point, my short-sightedness had caused me little trouble, and even then, so long as I was allowed a desk in the very front row of the classroom in order to see the blackboard, all was well. Nevertheless, there began to grow a feeling of inferiority, of being apart from the girls with a full share of sight. Little things fostered this feeling. At games I shone not at all, being always afraid lest a ball should break my glasses ; I focused slowly, and missed catches, and mistimed hits ; to a sensitive child it is hurtful to be picked last, when a team is being chosen, or to have the infrequent glow of coming first marred by the secretly admitted knowledge that the loyalty of a friend is more responsible than one's prowess at hockey or netball.

After three years of high school, there came a day when the medical man (whose periodic visits brought terror to my heart, since my very early days when glasses had been prescribed, and I had vigorously and unaccountably refused to wear them), decided that, unless very special care was taken of my highly myopic eyes, it was possible that I might lose my sight altogether.

A special school was advised, and I remember very vividly the summons through, first, the green baize door, then the heavy panelled brown one, into the presence of the then headmistress of my school. My foster-parents had left to her the difficult task of telling me that I must leave that school and go to a school for the blind if I still wished to become a teacher, as I most certainly did. Her infinite

kindness and understanding—and I bless her yet—helped me to see that this was not, as it seemed, so appalling a tragedy, but the only way I could attain my ambition. And—let those who raise eyebrows at guardian angels hide their faces, for my angel was surely there at that moment—I was asked if I would choose to go to a school in London, or to Chorleywood College. I remember that I felt it would be a kind of glory to go to school in the great city, thrillingly farther from home than Chorleywood which was only three miles away; and yet I said "Chorleywood"; and Chorleywood it was.

So, one September day in 1924 I arrived in this new and welcoming bit of the world where I was to be so happy for four years. I remember how intriguing was the front door, with the handle that turned the unexpected way, how grand the wide oak staircase looked, bending its way up past the Ship before the huge south window, how lofty were the ceilings and how long the corridor from the common room to the cloakrooms. The library was awe-inspiring, and the books so big and so dull to look at; the dining-room with its three tall windows was kempt and lovely—there were always flowers on each table—and the hall was a strange mixture of palace and gymnasium. I had lived always in a cottage, and so much space was exciting to me. In a bedroom for four, I was given a cubicle with dark green curtains that gave me an unexpected measure of privacy. My new school uniform was voluminous on my thin and colourless person; was there some uncanny prescience in the tape measure that Milly wielded, that foresaw my extra fourteen pounds by the end of one term? But I loved it all, even the unaccustomed goloshes and boots for garden and wet weather. I was given an essay to write on my favourite book, and I sat in the common room and wrote—in ink still—of "Jane Eyre"; and behold, next day I became a "B," and sat in a classroom, and owned a desk and a locker, and soon a mysterious instrument called a Stainsby Wayne.

I think that this world of school was so new and so other than anything that I had ever met, that I was too busy absorbing the newness to feel any great oddness in being among non-sighted and only partly sighted girls. They were strange, only as people I must learn to know, not as girls handicapped as I was not. I wanted so much to belong in this small home-like community, it did not seem particularly important that its members were in some ways different from girls I had known before.

It took a year, I think, before I was accepted wholly, as my lonely and rather obnoxious self ached to be accepted. I tried too hard to be all things to all people by fair means (and sometimes thoughtlessly by foul), and it took all the magic of patient kindness and understanding of Miss Monk and her staff to show me how to find my place by just being myself. It was so tempting to use my superior sight to gain the feeling of being needed. Gradually I grew from being the uppish high school girl, and became a member of this circle that was as warm as a family; I learned the invaluable lessons of forethought and restraint, and gained calmness and self-confidence.

Now to practical things. I learned to read Braille with my fingers much more slowly than a girl without sight; I could see well enough to read the dots just by glancing down, and sometimes the temptation to look was overwhelming. Only by reading with the book under the bedclothes did I come to use my fingers well enough to make reading in Braille a pleasure at all, and I never did become very fluent. There was one great advantage, however, in this slow reading. I absorbed what I so laboriously read, and gained a habit that I have since found very useful as I read ordinary print, a distaste for skipping, which I could not do in Braille. Writing Braille with a Stainsby was fun, and it was an easy matter to gain a wonderful clattering speed in this

accomplishment, but I remember well that accuracy suffered sadly. At first I found concentration difficult in the noise of writing thus among other girls similarly occupied, but soon this bothered me not at all; in fact I believe the blatant noise of the machines was far less disturbing than the insidious prick-prick-prick of a "prodger."

I wish that there could be discovered some less clumsy method of making arithmetic and algebraic calculations than using lead type and the type board. This is slow and tedious, and makes the finger ends tender and black. Here again though I gained advantage, for it was easier to develop the faculty of calculating in the head than on the board, and I have since been very grateful for this training.

The musical training I received at Chorleywood College was joy in the getting, and has been a continual source of pleasure ever since. I knew little of music when I first arrived, though I loved it, as it were, from afar. I sang alto in singing classes, and learnt to listen for and to hold other parts than the obvious melody. We had musical appreciation sessions, and to me these were wonderful, where we made friends, so to speak, with good music. We were taken to concerts, and enjoyed fine musicians who came to play and sing for us. We were taught to listen to each other play and sing, with tolerance and respect, and clapping as a means of applause was not encouraged.

We were always busy at Chorleywood, though there was time and opportunity for our private pursuits. I remember getting up early in the cold spring mornings to go down, rather fearfully, into the cellar to turn the eggs in the new incubator. Keeping chickens was one of the hobbies in which some of us were interested. Breaking the ice in the drinking bowls and cleaning hen-houses stay vividly in my memory, but I do not somehow remember collecting many eggs!

I know of no school where there is such an atmosphere of generous giving by the staff as I found at Chorleywood. There was no feeling that the staff taught classes and corrected written work, and then had done with us. They played in our games, summer and winter, walked to Rickmansworth to swim with us before the school had its own swimming pool—and ate currant buns before the return journey. They took us for supper picnics—lovely evenings I remember in the fields by a stream, with the scent of evening and sweet smelling plantains; whole loaves of new bread, hunks of cheese, hard-boiled eggs, and whole, crisp lettuces, rich slices of fruit cake and apples, and in a langorous repletion the magic of J. M. Barrie read aloud; then the quiet peace of the evenings for the walk home. In the winter, there were evenings and Sundays when one of the staff, very often Miss Monk herself, read aloud, while we sat by the fire and did handwork, if we liked, and were cosy and content. There were evenings when we rehearsed plays or home-made entertainments, often with Mrs. Chappell, a dear neighbour, to help us; evenings when we danced, and others when we sat on the radiators or on the grass, and just talked. Always one of the staff and at any time Miss Monk herself, was available for one's needs—maybe a confession, the discussion of a problem, or merely the reading of a letter. I seldom met impatience and never saw that demoralising thing called pity; though compassion there was, and great understanding of one's problems.

I suppose because the community at Chorleywood was so small and so home-like, discipline was easy and called for nothing of the order-mark ilk. We came to understand right thinking and right behaviour, and to respect these from a sense of compulsion in this knowledge, rather than from fear of punishment. We were not perfect children by any means, but there was a noticeable lack of malice in the everyday wrong-doings. I remember minding most dreadfully, after my most serious peccadillo, the disapproval and loss of the feeling of friendship among people I had grown to love; I would have

welcomed a definite hard punishment rather than the knowledge that I had to begin again to build the confidence in me that they seemed to have lost.

The time came when the School Certificate examination hung over the heads of six of us, like a very sword of Damocles. Examinations in school had been serious but kindly affairs, but this was of the outside world, impersonal and large. I remember well how my friend and I used to get up early in the morning and study before prayers, sitting on the squeaky cane chairs on the loggia outside the hall windows, with an apple to sustain us till breakfast.

The following year, another girl and I studied the five subjects required in the first year of the Froebel training for teachers. I was too young to go to College, but one was allowed to take, at school, the first year's course, which was chiefly academic rather than practical, and thus be a year ahead when one reached the College age of eighteen. Miss Monk taught us Natural History, and what fun we had in the learning, though she *would* try to make me hold a frog, and overcome my loathing of the poor beasts! We grew things in the shrubbery, we went driving in the faithful Morris to discover plants and flowers and trees that were not to be found close at hand. We lay on our tummies, and watched scuttling things and wriggling things in streams and ponds, and made the study we had at school a nightmare for those who did not like the creatures we housed there. I remember vividly the day we caught a leech. We carried it home somewhat fearfully in a jam jar, and gave it a nice home in a small aquarium (howbeit in solitary confinement, covered with a fine gauze meat cover), and thought it was safe. The next day Miss Deavin suddenly saw it wriggling on the carpet at her feet, in the middle of a lesson in mathematics. She did not like it at all, and the leech was given a new home and no more personal attention in the lily pond in the garden.

I left school in July, 1928, and it was a bitter parting; it had grown to be as dear a part of me as home is to most children, and I felt the sorrow of a tearing-up of roots that had taken hold so precariously, but had become strong under the loving care, the friendship and understanding in which I had grown for four years. Those years had bridged the difficult period of growth for my eyes too, and thereafter they were strong enough to enable me to read ordinary print once more.

To know oneself as one truly is is not an easy thing, but in all sincerity I believe that the best in the complex make-up of "me," I owe to Chorleywood College.

Dorothy's years at Chorleywood were short according to the calendar but lasting in effect—on her and on the school, for her human understanding brought comradeship welcomed also by those who came to know her in after-school days. To my mind, her influence was all the more valuable because it was unconscious; I remember realising that if Chorleywood had needed a head girl the office should have been hers, but that the existing freedom in the giving and taking of advice was nurturing good standards, instead of attempting to force them.

After gaining a First Class National Froebel Union Teachers' Certificate, Dorothy launched into a successful career first in Mauritius, later in a boys' school and in high schools, until, after a short experience of social work, she undertook the responsibilities of marriage and motherhood.

Dorothy's thoughtful self may be further revealed through her poem "Fame" contributed to Magazine XI:—

Fame walked abroad to find a friend,
 So tired he was of Multitude ;
 He wanted Sympathy, although
 Where he would dwell Fame did not know ;
 He only met loud hosts of praise
 Although he journeyed many days.
 Poor Fame, who sought a quiet friend,
 Mid Pomp and Praise and Multitude,
 He did not find one in the end—
 He'd never heard of Solitude.

Suzanne Murtagh also belonged to the pre-war period of Chorleywood College, arriving at the age of thirteen in the autumn of 1928. She writes :—

Back through twenty years, as I sit here, I try to turn the pages, back to my fourteenth year, to that first term at Chorleywood, autumn, 1928. It is not a pleasant thought, because for the first time in my life, I was unhappy most of the time, instead of being unhappy for only a small part of the time, and at school, never at all. I have been asked to write frankly. How shall I begin to tell ?

The first indignity was the uniform ; tunics made of homespun—very expensive, and very nice for a spinster living in the highlands of Scotland—but for a girl who took a pride in her clothes . . . ! The blouses were of shantung, also very nice—until you noticed the design. Woollen knickers and stockings were the order of the day. (The latter I flatly refused to wear, new girl as I was !). And so one dressed up, with, for outdoors, an ill-fitting brown school coat, and a brown velvet hat which was the one redeeming feature, but utterly ruined, so I thought, by a “homespun hatband.” This last was the final insult ; and I kept hidden in the depths of my drawer the hatband of my old school, trim black and red, with initials on the front, and sharp claws to fix it on by.

In spite of all this, and of the school which I had left behind, of which I was part—being of the third generation, and the fifth member of our family to go there—I made up my mind that I would make the very best of my chance, if chance it was. Although my defective eyesight had so far not worried me much, my previous headmistress was convinced that the strain would be too much as work became more advanced and so my mother and she finally decided that I should go to Chorleywood College.

How did I find life at Chorleywood ? Everyone was most kind, but expected more of me than I was able to give. I was first put with girls about a year older than myself, but with, on the whole, some sight. Here I spent two weeks, trying to forget my uniform, to take an interest in the work, and enjoying Braille lessons every day with Miss Pope, who with this, as with everything else she taught, made one feel that it was so worth-while to learn, and that only the very best standard would do. So I enjoyed Braille lessons, and progressed. Class lessons were a different matter. Chorleywood was thorough, and in a small class, my many gaps in education through inattention, absence, and not seeing the blackboard, began to rear their nasty heads. I was beginning to settle, but now I must go down to the class below, where I was the oldest, practically the only one with much sight among children who had used Braille from infancy. So here I was, at a worse disadvantage than I had been at my other school ! Maths. lessons became a nightmare to me ; I felt unpopular with the French and English mistress, for I could not “think” in Braille, and consequently, composition and English, the things at which I had shone, were “distinctly disappointing.”

At the end of three weeks, I went to the practising rooms, the furthest point of the school I could think of, and the flood-gates of pent-up emotion and sorrow broke. Only three weeks were gone, and at the least it would be another three years; how could I bear it? It turned out to be six!

Then on Sunday, September 30th, things changed somewhat; there was a fire at the Sunshine Home for Blind Babies at the other side of the Common, and Miss Monk, in her practical way, offered hospitality. I remember peeping through the French windows of our hall, and seeing two rows of little white cots with pale pink eiderdowns. This was an event, and, to my delight, lessons were frequently interrupted by some small boy or girl straying round the windows, and making itself known. How I longed to play with our little visitors, but this, like everything else—for so it seemed then—we were not allowed to do. This did not stop me, however, from having many a private peep through the crack in their nursery door, and that was where I first heard the children's grace, which in a few years was to become so familiar to me, and now is part of my life:—

Thank you for the world so sweet,
Thank you for the food we eat,
Thank you for the birds that sing,
Thank you, God, for everything.

So the Sunshine babies came and went, and I for one was more than sorry to see them go, for they had taken me out of myself, and given me something to think about other than my own predicament.

Chorleywood had a beautiful garden, thirty-six whole acres of it. It was the sight of the garden, I think, that had reconciled me to my mother's decision that I should become a boarder at Chorleywood; to my amazement however, when de-promoted I found that it was not considered safe for blind children of my age to wander so far afield, and therefore I also must abide by the same rule: I, who with only a dog for companion, had been used to wandering over miles of common and parkland at home, and who had travelled on the Underground railway to school alone for the past two years! If it had been a dull garden, it would have mattered less, but it was not; it was the garden of my dreams, with wonderful trees longing to be climbed, a lily pond with fish, a shrubbery, fields, and best of all a walled-in garden, which in that autumn term smelt sweet with low-growing apples, pink roses, and sweet briar. Besides this, every time I went for a walk, I had to be responsible for someone else besides myself, and, more often than not, for two people. So-called "gym" was a tame affair, the only apparatus being parallel bars. I would rather have stayed away than go through with this mockery of what I had been used to doing.

Pleasant things did, however, begin to break through the gloom in this first term. Handwork with Miss Turner was a great and eternal source of joy to me. I learned to make cane baskets, and was first introduced into the mysteries of the potter's wheel. How lovely to feel the clay being moulded under one's hands, and to make the wheel go smoothly! Sport-X, too, I loved, for that was the one real outlet for my pent-up energies. And I had made one real friend in Peggy Campbell, who being older and wiser than I, proved a great source of comfort and understanding. Peggy's life was short, but to me, she was a great saint.

And so home for the holidays, for which I had been longing. But as soon as I was home, I knew that I had changed irretrievably. I went to meet my cousin from his prep. school, and as I walked down the road, still wearing the hated homespun hatband, I felt self-conscious. I could not see properly; these children were normal, and they would

stare at me. For the first time in my life, I could not talk to him or my friends freely. How could I talk of Sport-X, when he played football, and of the blind children, and the strange shut-in life? I chose my words carefully, elaborated about the garden, and showed my first piece of pottery with pride. I told of the lovely house, and the kindness of the mistresses, I had changed completely in three months, and I knew it. My mouth, formerly rather a letterbox, was now set in a little tight line, with the corners specifically up—this from much practice in the mirror not to let "the corners go down."

I knew inside me, for the first time, that I was "different"; I "couldn't see properly," but no one mentioned it. The school seemed to ban the subject (though we girls did discuss sight problems) and my family found it altogether too embarrassing. So I realised these things, and tried to control myself, and thought a lot, and became a much more sensitive and emotional child.

I have dwelt long on this first term at Chorleywood, for it was perhaps the greatest uprooting I have had in my life, and one which, whether for good or evil, caused more stress and strain than any I had experienced. Five of us from "sighted" schools had gone to Chorleywood that term, and I think each of us, in her own way, went through something of an upheaval. We also shook the school up somewhat, I suppose, I for one being scornful of the idea of "one large happy family"; I wanted a school.

However, we adapted ourselves gradually, and changes took place—the first of them being the removal of the ban on the garden. Spring came, and with it the shrubberies turned to gold—daffodils were everywhere; I, being a town child, had never seen such a sight. These were followed by bluebells, and the pink campion. Soon I began to take an interest in nature all around me, and with the ever-willing help of Miss Monk and Miss Deavin, to whom I owe an unrepayable debt, I began to learn the names of wild flowers as well as cultivated, and to take an interest in the pond life of the garden. In these things I could be free, and began once more to feel myself, if a new, more earnest, thoughtful self. I was given a piece of garden, it was on the left hand side of the winter garden, and this was an eternal joy, and outlet.

Summer brought netball-tennis, a game similar to ordinary tennis, but played with the hand, and a netball. This is without doubt the best game I have ever played, and I would like to see ordinary people trying it. This was almost the only thing that was organised specifically for the partially sighted children. It was the one thing in which we were not always having to remember, and hold back for, the others.

I felt we were treated by the blind children as if we had at least normal sight: neither they, nor we, realised the difficulties we were to be up against when we came back into the outside world. Life at Chorleywood was run at the pace of the slowest members; one never had to hurry to do anything, and consequently one's eyes and mind became less and less able to cope with the normal hurry and scurry of everyday life, which will not wait for a partially sighted person, because, mainly, this disability is not observed.

Swimming at Rickmansworth was another pleasure of the summer. We went in an old lorry, and the last man in had to shut up the drop back, and sit on a kitchen chair! Here we were pretty free, and I always remember Miss Turner allowing me to try my length, when really I felt far from ready for this great feat. She must have had intuition, for after getting in at the deep end, for the first time in my life I eventually "made it," and was allowed the Freedom of the Baths, henceforth.

It was in the spring term of 1929, that Chorleywood decided that it was time to think of others, instead of ourselves. Consequently, through someone's bright idea, it was decided to collect, bundle, and

deliver wood, for the four almshouse ladies, who lived just round the corner of our drive gates. This we did, having first organised ourselves into groups, for certain days of the week. Later on, when I arrived at the senior position of being allowed to deliver the wood, I used to love visiting these old ladies. They were very grateful, and I think liked a talk as much as the bundles. They would take us round their tiny cottages, showing with pride all the many knick-knacks, and photographs of their sons and daughters. This was a good way of spending a Saturday afternoon, when the daily walk was over.

Then in the summer term of 1929, we decided that a still more active part should be taken in social service, and after much talk, and help from Miss Monk, we "adopted" the National Children's Home at Harpenden, Herts. We started working parties, at first held in the entrance hall, known then, and possibly now, as the common room. Later, when the weather was fine, they were held under the large cedar tree, known as the white seat cedar, for the obvious reason that in front of it stood a large, white painted seat.

These working parties grew in numbers and industry, much of the work being knitting or raffia basketry. Some of the things made were sent at the end of the term straight to the Home, others we used to sell at half term, and forward the money. Miss Monk very kindly allowed the working party to make her a hearth rug, the proceeds of which were sent. In about 1931 I became chairman of this committee for organising the social service, a position which I much enjoyed. Through this, I got to know better many of our little children, who always knew that if their knitting went wrong it could be put in my locker, and would appear corrected as soon as I could spare the time. Here my sight proved useful, and I copied patterns endlessly into Braille for them. One Christmas, Winifred and I decided that we would send as many small dolls as we could dress in the autumn term, and welcomed all donations of dolls and wool. At Christmas, we sent 69. This was when I learned to knit in the dark!

Another feature of the Social Service group was the Christmas Concert, in which most of the school used to take part. It began with the idea of giving a little Christmas entertainment to our friends in the almshouses, and ended by all the workers on the estate coming, and many more friends of the school besides; I for one enjoyed it more than any other function of the year. We got up little plays and skits, sang carols, and presented the old ladies with lavender bags made by ourselves. This party had always such a festive Christmas spirit, and reminded one that soon we would be going home to enjoy Christmas itself.

Life at Chorleywood grew happier with the passing years: I had learned to adapt myself to my new surroundings, and, while I still longed for the old life back again, I now lived more in the present, and was sensible enough to appreciate the good things that I had not had before, such as the country, wild life, and later on, care of the chickens. This last I loved, and as I grew more senior, I was given charge of the incubator. To my delight one year, everyone including Miss Pope who "did" chickens, caught 'flu, and I, as the one "man left alive," had sole care of the precious incubator at hatching time.

Then there was Mrs. Chappell; she lived near and ran our Choral and Dramatic Society. Acting was, and still is, my passion, and with her I learned the very first things about stagecraft. Mrs. Chappell visited us once a week in the autumn and spring terms, and in the summer she gave us a tea party in her charming garden. Those annual tea parties stand out in my memory.

One day in 1931, it was announced that my form was to work for our School Certificates. From this point, I feel that I owe much to Chorleywood. First, to Miss Monk, for making me believe that I was

capable of taking any exams at all ; for by now, having felt myself a square peg in a round hole for so long, I had decided that the academic life was not for me. Having since studied teaching for small children very thoroughly, I now realise that the gaps in my own education were greater than either I, or the staff, had been aware of. I had no grounding in either spelling or arithmetic, and so appreciate the teaching that was given me in those two years, 1932 and 1933, prior to taking the certificate in the summer term. For the first time in my life I really buckled to, and no one was more surprised than I, when one of the seven passes (out of eight entrants) was myself. We were all delighted ; it was a wonderful triumph for the staff.

So we began to specialise for careers ; three of us decided to do Froebel Part I, I with the intention of going to the Rachel McMillan Training College to complete the certificate. Here I would have to work with print, and start being a sighted person again ; I do so appreciate the fact that I was allowed to use print during this last year at Chorleywood. It made the break a little easier, though it was almost as difficult to adapt oneself to the outside world again, as it had been in those first few terms at Chorleywood.

Here I must say that in my view the tempo of life should be speeded up for partially sighted girls, and they should be kept far more in touch with the outside world. Blindness and partial blindness should be discussed. It took me more than ten years after leaving school to adjust myself, and to realise just what a lot in life I missed because I could not see it, and not, as I had supposed, because I was dull, or stupid. Partially sighted children should be taught these things, for they have been learned by bitter experience, and surely they should be saved such experiences in the future, if possible ? They should be taught to write properly, and to sew ; for these things will have to be done by them sooner or later, and my experience is that I am able to cope with most things, provided I have more practice than other people. This, not because I am dull, or silly, but because half my life is spent working out optical illusions, and trying to see what objects and situations really are !

But Chorleywood was to see changes. Miss McConnell introduced outdoor country dancing for all the children, and they wore charming brown cotton tunics, with bare feet. The woven hatbands that I detested gave way to bands of madder red, with the cedar tree badge on the front.

Here, if somewhat abruptly, I stop. I have shown Chorleywood as it seemed to me, the worst and the best of it. The best of it one holds for ever ; the worst of it may even by now have been remedied.

This gives another side to the picture—the reactions of a sensitive child, who, for a while, felt more handicapped in the segregation of this small boarding school, planned chiefly for blind girls, than she had in the open competition of her big day school.

On the physical side—reacting on the general self—there were obviously points for and against. For instance, the country air and well-balanced diet contributed to health ; but at meal-times in those days I watched with some anxiety as well as appreciation the girls with some sight helping those with less, before and during the satisfaction of their own appetites. Good comradeship ? Yes ! But how glad we were when reorganisation—following the provision of an electric hot plate—led to all at a table being served equally quickly, by members of the matron's and domestic staff.

The need Suzanne points out—for partially blind girls to have extra practice in becoming speedy in using such sight as they have—is difficult to meet fully in a school organised primarily for children nearly or wholly blind; up to the present the number of those with "difficult" but useful sight who want Grammar School education has not been thought large enough to justify a separate special school.

Suzanne's name conjures up pictures which include her slight figure high in a cedar tree, in considerable doubt about the process of coming down; later of her ruling, when in charge of wood-gathering, that the bundles were not fit to deliver to the almshouse ladies unless they held when flung against the iron supports of the winter garden; and of a small child on the running-board of her parents' car, tempestuous at their departure, made quickly happy and forgetful of all else by Suzanne's appearance, cheerfully "wanting her help with the baby chicks!"

Looking back on their schooldays, many of our blind pupils must have felt what one of them recently said "How good to us the girls from sighted schools were, and how much we took it for granted!" It is true that living intimately with others more handicapped than themselves led these partially-sighted girls to harness their sensitiveness to the needs of others, a quality that is surely part of the "best of it" that they "hold for ever."

Patricia Hart was seven when she came to school in 1934; and she left in 1945 for University life. She was one of the few pupils who spent the war-years at Chorleywood College, after becoming familiar with its pre-war, freer days, of which she writes from her experiences as a member of the Lower School:—

When I look back on Chorleywood now, the things that come first to my mind are the smell of the grass when it had just been mown, the bare patches under the cedar trees, the wood of the floors and the stairs and the fireplaces, and everywhere in the building people hurrying and people talking. A thousand memories come flooding in, but I think even these random impressions are not insignificant; for, like a meaning fragrance, they fuse, to remind me of the sense of security, of unending joy in life, no matter whether the sun shone, or the wind blew or the rain came through the dormitory ceiling—and of that desire to live and be, which made our school a pleasant and a good place to be in.

This sense of security was not one which would make us feel that we were sheltered and protected from the impact of life. It is true that each one of us had been, in some measure, jolted out of her expected course, but what we needed from Chorleywood was not so much protection from a second blow, as strength and means to direct ourselves on the course we had decided to take, no matter what adventure we might meet on the way.

I was seven when I lost my sight as a result of measles, and when in 1934 Sir William Lister, the most expert of oculists, told my parents that there was no longer any chance of its being restored, he assured them that his patient, because she was only a little child, could have a full life before her. He also advised them, as the first step forward,

to make an appointment to see Sir Beachcroft Towse, and already my parents had become aware of the attitude which they recognised again in Chorleywood. Sir Beachcroft Towse, another very busy man, treated them with the same generosity and kindness, telling them about Chorleywood. But in him, what impressed them most was that all he did was so utterly unimpaired by his blindness ; and they decided, in that very room, that just as he moved without faltering and worked with competence, so their child should move and work. But they were still very ignorant about the way to gain all that they wanted, and they had to go to Chorleywood to learn, almost as much as I did.

Meanwhile I had no suspicion of my parents' difficulties and fears, and it was not for several years that I grew to understand exactly what my illness meant. It seemed somehow, as though the world around me had changed, rather than I myself ; it did not even appear strange that I had to learn to do everything afresh, even to walk, for my mother or some imaginative nurse, was always there to make the process new and exciting. When I was unhappy, it was because I experienced some immediate pain, not because I realised the full implications of blindness. At home, I used to treasure my oldest pennies, until, in a weak moment, they found their way to "the little shop at the corner," in exchange for sweets, and I remember one day in hospital, weeping violently because I could not see the date on a penny ; but there were few moments of any unhappiness, and I did not cry because I could not see my favourite story-books, for I had so many other toys to play with, and my mother was always beside my bed, ready to read to me, if I would listen.

When I came out of hospital, my parents very wisely decided that it would be better if I did not go home to join the younger members of the family until I had spent a term at school, so, after a month's convalescence in Suffolk, we went straight to Chorleywood. It was just after the beginning of the summer term. I remember little about the people we met that day, but one typical encounter explains the whole atmosphere. Miss Peile, then head-matron, came out of her room to talk to us, and somehow kindness and happiness seemed to radiate from her. Crusoe, her dog, anxious to be the first to investigate the strangers, rushed out before her, and expressed the same greeting more violently, in a way which I then understood better. Unconsciously I knew it was my mother who had been teaching me to live in this strange, new world (for still I did not realise that the change was in me), and I was ready to be very unhappy at being parted from her ; but Miss Peile did not seem to think I ought to cry. She let me help her unpack, and showed me how tremendously exciting everything was, so that I scarcely found time to say Goodbye at all. I remember Miss Monk's hands as she came to greet us, but little more about her. During those first days, I was conscious of her as a presence, not exactly aloof, but on which one only fell back in extreme need. I suppose I was used to feeling a certain amount of healthy awe in the presence of a headmistress. Miss Knatchbull was our form-mistress during the first two terms, but even she was not vastly important, for I was often ill, and then it was Crusoe who shared my birthday cake, and Miss Peile who looked after me. In 1936 Miss Dewhurst came to take charge of the D's, and in her care, our numbers gradually swelling from two to six, we spent some extraordinarily happy, and, I think, profitable years.

Although I spent the next few years very pleasantly between school and hospital, by 1938 I was a permanent inhabitant, and, with childish faith, felt thoroughly established. Somehow it was not then quite the same school that I had first entered : a change was taking place, a change of form rather than matter, I think, but one whose pace grew more and more rapid, until once, during the war, we thought it quite

alarming. It was all part of the process which changed Chorleywood from the very happy family at Jordans (described to me once as a glorious holiday, for the pupils at least), to the efficient Grammar School.

Even in 1938 we realised that we were involved in this inevitable change, and we used to speculate excitedly in the dormitory at nights, envisaging a future of exaggerations. 1934 must have been the very end of the previous period, but still those four years seemed to bridge a surprisingly broad gap. No longer did we wear the old hand-woven ties and hat-bands, and the tunics which we irreverently termed sacks. Now we no longer laughed derisively when someone remarked that the school had been built to hold forty-five girls, for we knew it could hold half-a-dozen boys as well. No longer were there those delightful shopping expeditions on Saturdays, when we spent all our pennies on coloured paper and tiny dolls, and smuggled sweets into the dormitory. In 1934 going to school still felt a little like setting out on a wonderful holiday, but in 1938, though it was still glorious, it was also a very serious matter. Not only had it become customary for the names of certain elevated persons, who now held a School Certificate, to appear each year in the magazine, but there were the names of yet more elevated persons who held the Higher School Certificate. We possessed our own Gestetner machine, and for two years in succession we ourselves printed, and flourished with pride, our school magazine. This feeling of growth is typified in the words of the editor for 1938: "The library has now become the A's classroom. Certainly books and students both seem to require the other in order to be 'set off' with dignity, and the result here suggests a sixth form in personnel and plant. What the authors of 1066 would call a 'Good thing' lay at the back of this change; namely, the preparatory department has grown to the full and vigorous stature of requiring a large class-and-play-room to itself."

In the summer term of 1938 there were two particularly exciting events. First the visit from about a hundred and fifty headmistresses, the first of many opportunities for us to experience the delight of displaying to people whose knowledge seemed otherwise infinite, the one thing they did not know. Second, our great epidemic of measles, in which we, who were immune after an earlier attack, also took great pleasure; almost every form was diminished by at least half, bells were stopped, and, very conveniently, we forgot to do the things we did not like doing, and persisted in doing the things we did like doing, because "We didn't know the time." There were also two important academic successes: at Newnham Ruth Hitchcock gained her First in Theology, and at school Joan Woodcraft won a State Scholarship.

We always seemed to have a very liberal share of expeditions and entertainments, and this was a particularly fruitful year. Of those visits that we, as juniors, enjoyed, I especially remember listening to a talk by Grey Owl, the matter of which is completely blotted out of my mind by the memory of the excitement of mounting the platform when he had finished speaking, to shake hands with that god of wild things and of children. Expeditions were certainly the high-days in our school life; moreover they formed a brilliant contrast to the more homely entertainments of the war years, when we used to say to each other—"Do you remember when we had tea at the Mansion House?"

For us, as for the rest of the world, the year 1938 rose to its climax in September, when we listened to the wireless a little nervously, and, at the announcement that war had been averted, we went away relieved, and even forgot about it all until the following autumn. The seniors must have been much more conscious of the gravity of the world situation, but there had been little public exchange of news or talk.

There was the day, in 1937, when, whilst we were doing Africa in Geography, Miss Dewhurst explained to us that the Italians had invaded Abyssinia, and with a joyful fear, we drew pictures for each other of black natives attired in nothing but very bright loin-cloths, leaping from their canoes brandishing weapons in the astonished faces of Englishmen, whilst we tidied our hair in the changing room before lunch ; but we soon forgot even this fear, and in September we went away from the wireless, quite sure that there would be no world war, and so we lived on in confident tranquillity.

It is difficult to remember that the school lived through a spring and a summer term in 1939 for the activities of the early part of the year were completely overshadowed by the strange events of the autumn. Yet in July the much-discussed reunion was held, long remembered, because it was so long before it was followed by another. In that summer also one of our expeditions was to a performance of " 1066 and All That " ; and I remember two elderly ladies just behind us commenting, in great disgust—" And in the morning their mistresses will expect them to know some history." Before long the whole world was to see a much more confusing pageant of history.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WAR YEARS

AS our Magazine Editorial (1938-1939) said :—

To many people, no doubt, the past year has simply been the interim between the threat of hostilities and their materialisation—between Munich and the Maginot Line—but, though it was made increasingly apparent to most of us that our hopes for a real peace were premature, we feel that in the life of the school it has meant much more than a mere “curtain raiser.”

We have always been keenly interested in “foreign parts” and “foreign parties,” if we may be allowed the expression, and the last school year has given us opportunities of making many new ties with other lands and peoples and of strengthening those already formed.

We are glad to have had the privilege of meeting Professor Altmann, former Director of the world-famous Hohe Warte Institute for the Blind, in Vienna, Dr. Jahoda, also of Vienna, and many other distinguished visitors—from Sweden, from America, Holland and Germany. We have had opportunities of getting to know more intimately, because they stayed with us for a little time, Doris Schuler and Susie Schreiber, whose homes are in Germany, and Oddveig Rosegg from Norway. Three girls just leaving school did realise an ambition to discover for themselves the joys of going abroad. Sylvia Stephenson spent some months in a German family near Frankfurt am Main, and Marjorie Wood and Isobel Berrie paid a somewhat curtailed visit to an international camp in Holland.

Among new members of the school, too, there is quite a strong international element—Eve John has come here from Central China, and Clare Macgillivray from Canada.

And we had also heard within two years or so from Old Girls of their experiences when visiting France, Germany, Russia, Jamaica and Cyprus. Indeed, I believe that throughout the war we thought of allies and enemies alike as people playing their inevitable parts in a crazy, cruel fantasy.

To the little ones, doubtless, Hitler was the one villain of the piece. As one of them wrote :—

“ . . . And Hitler knows as well as me,
We can't have everything we see ;
Why can't he let poor Poland free ?
No one wants a war.”

I heard the small boys “killing Hitler” as they clambered about the balcony outside my study window. But in the main school German lessons remained popular, German carol parties were enjoyed towards Christmas time each year, and we all looked forward to the time when we could regain contact with Chorleywoodians and other friends abroad.

Plans for safe-guarding the school were in progress during the year before war was declared. Members of the staff and I attended Air Raid Precaution classes and became qualified as wardens, some of us also taking courses in Home Nursing and First Aid. In true British fashion the knowledge we somewhat fearfully acquired became the subject of Miss Deavin's apparently light-hearted jingle, "National Service":

" Forsan et hæc olim meminisse iuvabit."

I've seen the ball and sockets and the hinge joints uniplanar,
And healed by first intention the aseptic and the granular.
I've learnt the whereabouts of bones both humerus and jovial
And take on trust the presence of medulla and synovial.
I've practised all the twists and folds of bandages triangular,
And gathered how to tan a burn with methods quite new fangular.
I've more or less located the carotid and occipital
And fastened on a tourniquet intended not to slip at all.

I've enveloped my corners and my draw sheets are immaculate,
And sterilised the instruments both clinical and spatulate,
I've identified the pilot to be used in tracheotomy,
And understand the meaning of pertussis and phlebotomy.
I know that the fastigium precedes the defervescence
And that after many ups and downs succeeds the convalescence
Of morbilli and rubella both pandemic and sporadic
And that certain little germs exist endemic not nomadic.

Of many gaseous substances my ignorance I try and hide
But not of Lewisite, C-L or Bromo-benzyl-cyanide.
I've sniffed at all the tubes and wept at gases lacrimatory,
And learnt the use of anti-dim in matters respiratory.
I know that there are times when one must needs become a troglodyte,
Especially at dawn or dusk or on a warm and foggy night.
I've heard the call of buzzers and of sirens ululatory,
And memorised the lay out of sheds decontaminatory.

In fact when all my learning's not theoretical but practical,
When I've administered FIRST AID avoiding errors tactical;
When I have rightly diagnosed a state of incubation,
And practised my HOME NURSING in aseptic isolation,
And really wielded stirrup pumps to banish the incendiary,
And as an AIR RAID WARDEN earned a bit of my stipendiary,
This latter-day pursuit of facts malignantly elusive
Eventually may prove to be not totally effusive.

In my autumn term, 1939, Report to the Governors, I wrote :—

A.R.P.: An exercise was staged at Chorleywood College on 9th December. The "Major Incident" included high explosives, incendiary bombs and mustard gas, and called out Fire Brigade, Demolition Squad, Ambulances and First Aid Parties to deal with nine casualties. The Junior School accepted an invitation to visit local friends during the exercise, and the rest of the school got much interest out of the experience.

Yes, "interest" was the right word for the attitude of the nine girls who were "casualties," with labels tied to their wrists naming various appalling damages that required attention.

Well! The war and the years moved on, and this early exercise was the only time Chorleywood tested these services. Nothing seriously untoward befell us. Naturally enough the crowded conditions in which we lived caused minor illnesses to spread more, to last longer, and to include the Matron and other members of the staff.

During the year before the war began, all windows that had not shutters were provided with thick curtains—mostly blue Bolton sheeting. Later on these proved quite inadequate, so they had to be supplemented, all skylights painted black, and black strips added between the shutters to prevent beams of light escaping. The basement—a wide passage, with alcoves, leading to two wine cellars—was made into a shelter against poison gas by blocking up all air-holes, and fitting both entrances with curtains arranged in the approved style, to keep gas out while letting people in. Here, too, experience of the 1940 raids taught us to plan instead for the whole school to sleep down below. All coal was heaved out, and the odd seats which had served for short sojourns in the cellars were replaced by all the beds we could fit in. Air-holes were unplugged, a ventilating fan added, and a trap-door to the typing-study made, as an extra emergency escape. Under these conditions we were considered safe from blast, and all but a direct hit.

To return to 1939. In spite of a growing tension in international affairs, it was possible to hold our Old Girls' Reunion during the last week-end of July, but not long after we had dispersed it seemed to be a matter of when, rather than whether, Great Britain would enter the war. Children were being evacuated from London and other towns. We therefore arranged to open the school early to all pupils whose parents or guardians thought it wise for them to return before hostilities broke out.

So, on August 26th, a few members of the staff and I arrived at school to receive those who came. Twenty-two pupils collected before the beginning of term (21st September). Our three short-hand-typist trainees returned too for the first few restless months, and several other Old Girls came then, and again later on, giving help during staff absences.

In early September, we also received a contingent of the staff of the National Institute for the Blind, as it was considered unwise to keep all the staff and records under the one roof in Great Portland Street. How fortunate we were that these "evacuees" who cramped our space did *not* cramp our style! "The N.I.B." came alive to children and staff, and names in the files became real people to "Head Office"—a good experience!

One of these N.I.B. guests, Miss M. G. Thomas, wrote in our Magazine of her experiences :

What a hot day that Sunday was ! And how pleasant it was to get to our journey's end, and to be met in the drive by kindly Old Girls of the College, who seized on one's suitcases—which had grown steadily heavier at each step across the common from the station—and carried them up to the house. As an evacuee whose solitary meal that day had been two Ryvita biscuits and a tomato, it was delightful to eat something more solid, to have a refreshing bath, and to get to bed in a dormitory all polish and white curtains. That night I shared the room with only one N.I.B. evacuee, who had arrived an hour or so before me, and who was a little inclined to be patronising, as is always the way with new girls who get there first ; I consoled myself with the reminder that there would be two more occupants of the dormitory next day, and it would then be my turn to show them where they got off. We exchanged a breathless whisper or two after turning off the lights, but the tradition of schoolgirls dies hard, and I had been (thirty odd years before) at a school where talking after lights out was a major crime. Here I may confess that I have no ear for sound, and my companions in the dormitory must have found me a trying colleague, as I was slow to distinguish between the Chorleywood owl and the air raid alarm, and would officiously suggest exchanging bed for basement at untimely hours when it was really quite unnecessary.

On that first night, however, it was a warning, and I put on Miss Monk's winter coat (my luggage was incomplete, and she had kindly lent me a wrap overnight, hoping that it would give me added dignity in a rather undignified situation. We all went below in perfect order, said " Here " very bravely when the Roll was called—somehow that was very exciting—and then sat down demurely on our soap boxes in the rather dim light of bicycle lamps. The cellars at Chorleywood are most impressive, suggesting city magnates with vast stores of the port of '75, and having that rather curious smell of mushroom characteristic of all the best cellars. My companion on a soap box was, like myself, resplendent in borrowed finery, for he had been lent a saucy pair of scarlet fur-trimmed bedroom slippers by one of the staff, lending a touch of oriental splendour to his rather drab mackintosh.

Soon the All Clear sounded and, complete with the black kitten, which had been brought down partly for his own sake and partly as a solace for the smallest of the small boys and girls, we trooped upstairs again and back to bed.

Everything was delightful. The staff treated us with the most wonderful kindness, and never let us guess that we were a nuisance or invaders of the calm of the common room. They were so human too, so much like ordinary people ; and I in my foolishness had, for all the years since I left school, been imagining that all members of their profession were dragons who will give you an order-mark as soon as look at you. Indeed, the only people who tried to discipline us at all were the little boys in the Kindergarten and even they were not harsh. " You N.I.B. people do talk a lot," one observed sadly to the Head of the Services to the Blind, " You really must not talk when Miss Monk has rung her bell."

Most mornings began after breakfast with a saunter across the common—all shining and cobweb-spangled in the autumn morning sunshine—to meet the train that brought the " day-boys," who, when they are not at Chorleywood, are the Editor and the Head of the Services to the Blind Department.

There were minor difficulties, of course, in carrying on an office so far from London, and the telephone gave us some anxious moments.

It was extended for our benefit from the main telephone box in the corridor to the library, and like some temperamental prima donna, it seems to have resented a change. One day it rang insistently. I answered it. The person at the other end seemed extraordinarily persistent and difficult to satisfy, and kept asking me if I were the railway station. At last I said haughtily ; " I am Chorleywood College." The voice became strangely meek : " I am Miss Monk," it said. That happened on the third day after our arrival, and my ears still burn with shame at the recollection.

I well remember our first raid on Germany. I was in my sitting-room reading to a big group of girls when Miss Thomas burst into the room with the latest wireless news, saying dramatically, "*We* have raided Germany!" A shocked silence followed until she added "with leaflets!" A sigh of relief then filled the room. But as time went on these girls, as others of course, had to get used to the idea of our country using weapons as hated as any, and to centre their pride in the courage of those who handled them.

The first contingent of the N.I.B. withdrew to work at Great Portland Street before Christmas 1939, as interruptions (from the skies !) were not frequent then ; but in September, 1940, they came back in full force, with van loads of office equipment, and furniture from Pirates Spring, a children's holiday home closed as such "for the duration." The big dormitory on the first floor and some second-floor rooms became their offices, other top floor rooms provided sleeping accommodation, and the common room (entrance hall) became the N.I.B. dining room. At this time the school settled down to sleep in the cellars, until it became possible—when raids were fewer and shorter—for some of the N.I.B. to return to town, setting free dormitory space for some of the girls.

During the war years we did our best, of course, to follow such advice and instructions as reached us from Government and A.R.P. Services. At one time we all wore identity discs like lockets ; then came identity cards, for which we made "travelling pockets" tied round the waist under the tunics. There was the fitting, testing and labelling of gas masks which, for a time, we carried with us even on walks.

We (members of the staff and I) became A.R.P. Wardens for the school, and kept in close touch with the Chorleywood A.R.P. headquarters.

The electric bells, originally supplied for use as fire alarms, served also for air raid warnings to send the school to the cellars ; for this purpose a succession of short rings was made, by intermittent pressure of a pin through the hole in the middle of the glass cover. The air raid sirens of surrounding villages provided many and various "warbling notes," so our own rousing bell had the last word !

Unescorted expeditions became rare, for we had to know the whereabouts of all pupils, in case of an emergency affecting the

school as a whole. When trains were made unreliable by war conditions plans were made for some one to travel with the pupils, avoiding London when practicable. For several holidays, the school remained open for those for whom return home was inadvisable. In the summer holidays, 1940, one of the camps organised by the Federation of University Women for secondary school girls was held at our school, and eight Chorleywoodians joined it.

In term-time the general plan was "carry on." When an air raid warning sounded the school picked up its books, plates, or suitcases of clothes—according to whether it was caught in class, at a meal or in bed—proceeded to the cellars, and, after the roll-call, carried on once more down below. There were times when people got caught in the swimming pool and dripping figures collected in the basement, followed by members of the staff with essential clothing. But swimming reached its peak in 1940, when it was reported :—

"To make amends for the bad winter we had an unusually warm and long swimming season, by the end of which not only could all the Middle and Upper School swim, but all except two qualified as "deep-enders." Of the ten juniors three became "deep-enders," and four others learnt to swim.

Royal Life Saving Society examinations were held in July and M. Wilson added a second bar to her bronze medallion, while M. Bridge, H. Carter, B. True, A. Walmsley and Y. Robinson gained their bronze medallions and M. Franklin, S. Jennens, J. Glenister and M. Matthews their Intermediate Certificates."

Some exceptionally good academic work was done too. Muriel Easter, arriving in the spring of 1941, concentrated into seven terms the scholarly work that secured her a good Higher Certificate and Entrance to St. Hugh's College, Oxford.

One of the school's successful efforts to be helpful in war-time was described by the Second Form in the 1943-1944 magazine :—

We have been hiping for four autumns now—ever since the Government appealed to us to hip. We put on overalls to protect our clothes. As there are not enough hips in one spot we divide up into parties, and take any baskets or bags and haversacks and pockets we can find, and we take sticks too to help pull the high branches down. We go over the fields and on the common. It's awfully prickly, but it's great fun. One of us fell down in the middle of a bush and another felt her hair being pulled and the ribbon was found hanging on a branch. Some one else found what she thought was a squashy hip, and it was a great big spider !

Afterwards the hips are weighed and sorted to make sure that there are no stalks left. Then they are taken to a W.V.S. centre and they are made into rose-hip syrup for babies.

Last year we got 126 pounds, and we won a certificate from the Herts. County Herb Committee. The money we got, twopence a pound, we sent to the Red Cross.

In September, 1943, we said goodbye to the last of our evacuees. The school then became able to grow rapidly, for pre-war standards were laid aside and we fitted in extra beds wherever the dormitories would hold them (and had duplicates, for use during night alerts in the cellars) to make room for new pupils, for whom applications for admission became embarrassingly many.

In general appearance the school could not keep pace with the standards suggested by the winning of medals and of posture badges, or with the hair-curlers that introduced a new feature when we foregathered at night! We got to look very drab, for much of the school uniform became unobtainable, and there had to be a great deal of "make do and mend." Garments had to last much longer and then, perhaps, be cut down for a smaller child. Equipping the children with adequate shoes also claimed much time and attention; and it was a matter of co-operating with the parents to see that the most urgent needs had first claims upon the clothing coupons.

The problems of outfit, and of food, sweets and soap rationing were not, of course, peculiar to Chorleywood, but I do think we were exceptionally fortunate in having the right people to deal with them. If I believed in the value of medals and had only one to bestow "for services rendered during the war" Miss Cuthill would undoubtedly have it. As lady-cook-housekeeper hers was the key position, and there was no limit to her use of it. She brought confidence with her high standards to the domestic staff; thanks to her catering and cooking, we had appetising, well-balanced meals; she accepted in friendly fashion all the extra work caused by the N.I.B. evacuation to Chorleywood; and she was ready to lend a hand when she saw that extra help was wanted on the Matron's staff, among whom there were inevitably a number of changes. Her familiar laugh lit up the faces of many besides those who heard the joke; yet she had her full share of personal anxieties.

My war-time part was not inspiring. Apart from general organisation, teaching, my share of wardens' duties and ever-growing correspondence, it naturally fell to me to act rather like an umpire in a game with changing rules, and involved deciding which seemed the lesser of necessary evils. I found a leavening influence in University Tutorial Classes on various aspects of post-war reconstruction. These drew me across the common in all weathers one evening each week, sometimes accompanied by one or two of the senior girls.

Members of the staff responded whole-heartedly to the innumerable claims of these special times, even rising to an original entertainment to the school on its Twenty-first Birthday—a burlesque pageant in verse, illustrating characteristic stages in the school's development. This was followed up in early 1943 by an Old Girls' celebration at the G.F.S., Townsend House (Miss Upcott's Headquarters). Invitations to all within reasonable reach were issued by the organisers, Doris John, Ruby Henderson and

Marjorie Wood, who had all, by this time, considerable experience of secretarial work under the conditions of London's blitz.

Patricia Hart's further account of school experiences will best reflect what life was like in war-time to some, at least, of the young :—

Towards the end of August, 1939, we all received notices at our homes from Miss Monk, saying that, owing to the disturbed condition of Europe, the school would re-open early. Accordingly, we began to assemble on August 28th. There were not many of us at school during those three weeks of holiday, and we certainly had a very good time. Considering that we were almost entirely confined to the grounds during this not very brief holiday, I think we must have been quite surprisingly " Good." for my memories are of none of the catastrophes into which our evil ways frequently led us ; rather of squatting in the midst of a blackberry bush, under the careful but lenient supervision of Miss Deavin, consuming vast quantities of luscious berries whose true destiny was next year's jam pot ; or of chasing the school's kitten over the desks and chairs just piled with mathematical precision on top of each other to facilitate the processes of cleaning, or of reclining on a bank reading " The Mill on the Floss." In fact the members of staff, who generously sacrificed part of their holiday to re-open the school, succeeded so well in their endeavour to see that our holiday was not curtailed, that we even resented the return of the rest of the community in the middle of September—although it was not long before we found ourselves welcoming the change.

On September 3rd almost everyone in the building crowded into Miss Monk's sitting-room, and sat breathlessly on the floor while Mr. Chamberlain made his pronouncement. Afterwards we plunged down into the air raid shelter for the first time. In expectation of this day, the old wine-cellars had been cleared of coal, made gas-proof, and strengthened with tree trunks, which formed an additional support for the roof, and they at first proved a most enchanting retreat, which we thought might easily have been the mysterious cavern beneath the mountains whither the Pied Piper lured the children of Hamlein Town. It was some time before we spent our first night in the cellar, but that was the climax of enchantment. It was before any arrangements had been made in preparation for long sessions in the depths, so we sat on huge wooden boxes (only a few of the very youngest dozed on camp-beds then), each one of us clasping her gas-mask to her, with no hope of being called upon to use it. We sucked large, round pieces of barley-sugar, offered to us in case we should be in need of sustenance, while Miss Monk read us the fascinating chapters of " Dick Willoughby" in which the epileptic foams at the mouth as a result of sucking soap.

The inevitable results of a state of war crept over the school slowly and silently, just as they made their insidious invasion into communities all over the country. I remember remarking one day, just after war had been declared, as we leaped out of bed and ran over to the window to see whether the morning was fine, that it did not seem as if we were at war. It was a foolish enough thing to say, but at school, as everywhere else, I believe, we were struck with a feeling of incredulity ; it was as though we were living partly in 1937, partly in 1940, so that it took us those first few weeks of the war to regain our balance. During the whole of those six years we were as little affected by the war as it was possible to be, for, although we liked to think that we were in the front line, when London was suffering any kind of bombardment, we were nearly as safe as we could be anywhere, and did not have to endure the interruptions of evacuation. We did not even have the

inconvenience of sharing our building with another school, and attending lessons only in the morning or afternoon.

In retrospect, 1940-42 looks more like one triennium than a succession of three separate years. I suppose it was because we were living in a necessarily smaller world. It becomes difficult to separate that Saturday evening when we were fitted for our gas-masks, and learned how to support a piece of paper on our grotesque muzzles, from those later evenings, when we seized a mask from the shelf as we passed, ducked under the gas-curtain, and moved on, in a comparatively orderly procession, to our allotted places in the cellar; it becomes difficult too, to distinguish the precise date when we took up permanent night-lodgings in the cellar, and began to feel pride in the superior merits of our subterranean dormitory. The first contingent of N.I.B. staff arrived in the autumn of 1939, for a few months, and in the September, 1940, a much larger division, which brought with it its own office furniture, and was accommodated in the "Big" dormitory, as well as in nearly all the rooms on the top floor. Since we now spent a considerable portion of our time below ground, we had little contact with our evacuees, merely passing them in the common room as they ate their meals, retreating from the hall in haste when they came to play ping-pong in the evenings, or hearing from afar the sounds of the dances they organised, to which all pupils over sixteen were invited, as well as some of H.M. Forces.

In these early days rooms were put to the strangest uses, especially while the large contingent of N.I.B. staff was in residence, and we were sleeping in the cellar. There were some beds on the ground floor occupied by the few seniors who did not sleep in the cellar, and who called themselves fortunate, although they were actually in much more cramped quarters than those of us who remained downstairs. I remember at one time we had chests of drawers stacked in a division room, and a long procession of girls, in various stages of disarray, would make its way to the changing room for a morning wash; the classroom at the foot of the oak stairs was, with too little respect, known as "The overflow," and was used, during a 'flu epidemic in the in the spring of 1941, as the sick-room, while the sick-room itself became a classroom for the A's as long as there was no raid in progress. The "railway seat" found its way into the corridor, with a bed placed tidily at its right hand, and there were also beds in almost all the classrooms, as well as in the dining-room, for the accommodation of Miss Monk, Miss Deavin, Miss McConnell, and the rest of the brigade of Air Raid Wardens. Another of our occasional irregularities was the autumnal walk which, for a while, took the place for most of us of our customary exercise in the garden during First Break, and of our first lesson. These walks were very delightful, chiefly because they had no place in our ordinary routine.

Of course war put a stop to our expeditions to London, and we learned to seek entertainment much nearer home. Even Sport-X matches had become a delightful rarity; but there were plays at Amersham and Watford, long walks culminating in Miss McNair's piano recitals at Chipperfield, visits to Jordans, the model village at Beaconsfield, Milton's cottage, and other places of interest. Year by year the school gradually took a more and more active part in local affairs, until, in 1943, groups regularly attended the Chorleywood Choral Society, a Youth Fellowship organised by the Rickmansworth Methodist Church, a University tutorial class in Chorleywood, which was studying the problems of reconstruction, and various other meetings which from time to time were arranged in the district. We grew more accustomed to entertaining each other, and in 1940 we experienced our first deviation from the traditional piano recital on the last day of term. The varied programmes of this year, pro-

vided by each form in turn, consisting of music, recitations, and readings, proved much more popular, and we were not sorry when the old recital did not creep into place again.

In our weekly working-parties, we turned our attention from baby-clothes to socks, pullovers, helmets and gloves for men in the forces. We still sent small parcels including sweets to the National Children's Home at Harpenden, and collected wood to take each week to the old ladies at the alms-houses ; but each autumn we also gathered hips (the most exhilarating and enjoyable of our national efforts), to be made into hip-syrup, and we sent the money which we earned to the Red Cross ; besides the usual collections for the Mount Lavinia School for the Blind and the Save the Children Fund, contributions were made to the Ambulance Fund, as well as several refugee organisations ; we exercised greater economy in the use of paper, and not only was all the waste carefully salvaged, but we dared not commit a scrap of paper to its doom unless every line of available space on it had been used ; even then contests of strength were held over a piece of machinery which looked extraordinarily like a washing mangle, and was expected to erase all dots. However, the machine did not rise to our expectations, and consequently spent the next few years in resting its unsightly bulk in one class-room after another. In 1942 under the guidance of Miss Dewhurst, there was a concentrated effort to raise money for the Red Cross. We spent most of our odd time that summer term in the hand-work room, labouring at toys, baskets, rugs, slippers, and all the fancy articles which Miss Dewhurst's astonishing ingenuity could devise, in preparation for the sale which was held on June 27th-28th. Besides the sale of goods, entertainments were provided in the evening by the Choral and Dramatic Society and by the singing classes ; local visitors were invited on the first day, and parents and friends on the second, since that was half-term Saturday. A hundred and ten pounds was raised. There was also an exhibition of knitted garments, at the end of the spring term, to encourage us in knitting for the forces in our free time. In the same year, the A's established the habit of presenting a short entertainment to the rest of the school at the end of the spring term, in aid of the Red Cross, and this habit was continued until 1945. In common with all other communities, we suffered a great shortage of domestic staff at this time, and accordingly we used to arm ourselves with brooms, mops and dusters, and wielded these, not always with laudable effect on the cleanliness of our class-rooms, each morning before breakfast. Our domesticity did not extend far, however, and was wisely kept within the limits of novelty, so that we found some enjoyment in forming teams for washing-up after breakfast, and vying with each other in speed and efficiency.

About this time, we indulged in a variation of winter sport. Although the decrease in the number of Sport-X matches was partially due to difficulties of travel, it was also influenced by the effects of two particularly hard winters, which resulted in hilarious tobogganing down the slope outside the back gate ; and in sliding and skating both expert and primitive, on the frozen swimming pool. The summer weather likewise shaped our lives in those days, for, when it was hot, we sallied forth to lessons, armed with chairs, which we placed in circles all over the lawns. I must confess that I was glad when we were not blessed with an abundance of hot days that term, for it is always pleasanter to work hard, or not at all, and neither alternative was possible in those circumstances. Lessons were yet further interrupted by our "Eleven days' evacuation," in the winter of 1941. One Sunday morning it was discovered that unexploded bombs were taking their rest in a nearby field, and accordingly we spent the whole of that day between the dining room (carefully shuttered) and the cellar, except when a party of one mistress and two girls performed a solemn promenade first

down and then up the drive, for the sake of air and exercise. To comply with an order from the police to empty the side of the building which faced the field, each form was next day apportioned some room on the other side of the house. Ours, I remember, was the room which would normally have been the boys' dormitory, and it was still filled with wash-stands and piles of mattresses, although not with beds. As we had little or no apparatus, we could do no prep. and consequently the best moment in the day came in the evening, when we used to make a hurried excursion to the chicken runs to claim a share of the late apples there; armed with these, and with a pocketful of chestnuts, we would scuffle for the best reading perch, a high pile of mattresses in a corner of our new form-room. After eleven days had elapsed, the bombs were exploded and, although we had enjoyed this somewhat strange way of living, we returned to our routine with great joy.

1941, though a disturbed year, had its more progressive features; a Folk Dance and Song Society was organised by Miss McConnell, and Miss Edwards instituted a Music Society, both of which met regularly every fortnight on Wednesday evenings. By now the Literary, Scientific and Debating Society formed by Miss Deavin in 1937 was flourishing. The desire to achieve a good posture was encouraged by the formation of groups, and whereas we had before shunned the disgrace of having to attend remedial classes before school in the morning, we now liked even less to be stigmatised as "in Group III." Our aspiring hopes were stimulated by the presentation of posture badges to those who had established themselves in Group I.

We were gradually returning to more normal standards of living, and in 1942 there came that great day when we moved our bedclothes from the cellar to the dormitories. It now sounds a trifling event, but I shall never forget that first night upstairs. Having climbed into the upper school since 1940, we were now elevated to the top floor, and since we had scarcely been there before, that was exciting enough, in spite of the fact that the school's growth meant that there were no longer any curtained cubicles, but just dormitories crowded with beds; but the air was so fresh, even when still infiltrating from behind closed window curtains, the sheets felt so much cleaner, that it almost seemed a sin against night to go to sleep.

There were, too, those wonderful Saturday evenings, when we used to walk the six miles or so with Miss Monk to Chipperfield, picnicking on the way. There, several days a week, Miss Mary McNair used to play the piano in her own delightful home, to as many people as came to listen, often making her programme after asking for the special wishes of each of her audience. This was surely a unique war-effort; for we were not asked to give money to some charity at the end of the evening. This was no ordinary gathering; Miss McNair's aim was to afford a few people relaxation, and the truest kind of enjoyment. Those of us who sat there, on those summer evenings an hour before sunset, with the fragrant garden outside, and beyond it the quiet village, listening to Beethoven and Mozart, Chopin—and, pre-eminently I remember, Handel's Water Music,—must have felt that we had touched something which meant even more than charities, and realised that the world was still not possessed by hot-handed action.

It was in 1941 that the first party of students from the Institute of Almoners came to visit the school, and after them we enjoyed many similar invasions, most of them made by almoners and those attending the British Council's courses of Social Welfare for Allied Nationals, from China, Poland, Belgium, Greece and, indeed, most of our European allies. The idea was that they should see how the school worked, but I think we must have gained at least as much from it as they did. Thus

it was that the time-honoured routine of our Wednesday afternoon was interrupted, and walks and society meetings did as best they could.

The visitors would arrive in the early afternoon, or sometimes before lunch, and flock to the hall, where Miss Monk would give them an introduction to Chorleywood; and meanwhile we were prancing about the library, attired in our gym-vests and knickers, waiting the first demonstration, always the most enjoyable, because it was just another excuse for an extra gym lesson, and no formal demonstration at all. At first it was really exciting to show off before so appreciative an audience, for almoners and allies alike forgot how deftly they had learned to wield the pen in their own schooldays: the "prodger" came to most of us yet more naturally, for it could be used to so many more purposes than even the most accommodating pen. Perhaps it was a healthy sign that the excitement did pall quite quickly, but even then there were some very pleasant moments. The visitors would see how we danced, how we climbed ropes, how we did our short-hand typing, how we used our "prodders," Stainsbys and upward-writers; how we did our maths, and how Braille served for our reading of English, French, German, Latin and Music. Then they would be divided into small parties and conducted round the classrooms, of which the prep. department always proved the most popular. The best part of the proceedings was tea, and not merely because Miss Cuthill excelled herself in catering for the occasion, but because we, the seniors, went to have tea with the visitors in the hall, where we were expected to answer any questions, but in fact most of the questioning was usually on our part, and it was the visitors who did most of the talking, having plenty of interesting ideas to share.

As I have already indicated, there was a particularly rapid change in personnel in the school, especially between the years 1941-3, and this could not fail to have its effects on the whole community. Moreover, many of the newcomers were girls of fourteen or fifteen, coming to Chorleywood from other schools, and they brought with them more fixed habits and traditions than we younger children had done, so that they were less easily absorbed into the thinning stream which flowed down to us from earlier days. At first we considered these newcomers rough and rowdy, and they evidently thought us prudish and self-important, but gradually they had their effect upon us and we had our effect on them, so that before long the foolish distinctions of old and new were lost.

We were now advancing towards our Silver Jubilee and our new developments seemed to close an era. The movement towards efficiency was rounded off in 1944, when we adopted numbers for the forms instead of the old letters, and gradually more responsibility was delegated to the sixth form, which we liked, because it gave us a sense of being useful members of the community, and because it made us feel more completely on a level with the forms in other schools.

A number of those who had been on the staff for many years left; Miss Monk, Miss Deavin, Miss Dewhurst and Miss Campbell all went within one year, and at the end of that autumn term it seemed as though the whole back-bone of the school had been torn away; but of course when holiday meditation gave place to school activity, we realised that it was not so, that the school was alive and growing, fed and strengthened by the past, and aspiring towards the light and hope of the future. We knew that the school was passing into a new epoch, and we were frightened of that knowledge, but we had no need to fear, for if some of the old links were broken, many still held firm.

It was by a particularly happy chance that there was a reunion in 1945, just when the past and present needed to meet in the flesh, and before they could have any feeling of having drawn apart.

CHAPTER IX

ADAPTATIONS IN TEACHING ; AND THE EXPERIENCES OF A MEMBER OF THE STAFF (MISS DEAVIN)

THE use of Braille, of course, influenced all class-room subjects and so claims first attention. This system, invented by the Frenchman Louis Braille (1809-1852) does marvellous service : different combinations of the six raised dots giving access by touch to literature in many languages, to the technical terms of mathematics, science and music.

The table facing page 48 shows some of the signs used, and illustrates the fact that each of certain groups of dots has to serve for several purposes. Grade I (uncontracted) Braille consists of the letters of the alphabet, numbers and punctuation signs. The normal plan is, of course, for beginners in Braille to become thoroughly at home with this before embarking on Grade II (contracted). In Grade II, used by most Braillists, there are many contractions and abbreviations ; for instance each letter stands also for a word, and preceded by certain dots, for other words or word-endings, and there are abbreviations of the kind one often uses when taking rapid notes, such as *hmf* for himself.

There are so many right ways of teaching Braille, according to the enthusiasm of the teacher and the individual needs of the pupils, that I will not describe any of them, but content myself with saying that it is of first importance to secure the pupil's confidence in being able to read by touch. This requires frequent short lessons at the outset. A beginner in Braille, whether young or old, left too soon to try to make out Braille signs unaided, may well get depressed ; a pupil with some sight will probably be tempted to start the bad habit of looking at it ; while a blind pupil may attack the dots in a manner that militates against future efficiency—and flattens the dots.

Our little ones used to read stories in Grade I with such fluency and speed that I am confident that the value of Grade II is chiefly in saving space, and the consequent economy in paper and costs rather than in saving the reader's time. In fact I commend the extension of the use of Grade I for those who first tackle Braille in their later years.

Girls coming to school, if ten or older, needed to pass quickly from Grade I to Grade II, and we found that the majority mastered fully contracted Braille within three months, but needed considerably longer practice before they could really enjoy it, except in the achievement.

A typical catalogue of Braille books published by the N.I.B. was a volume of about 200 pages, covering educational books, including foreign languages, fiction for all ages and interests,

poetry and drama, devotional books and much else ; also a number of periodicals : The Braille Mail, Braille Radio Times, Progress, Punch (selections), The School Magazine, Braille Musical Magazine, and others. And all this literature is available to blind people in the British Isles for one third of the cost. So we had a good source for our stock of books for class and free-time reading ; and, in addition, a continually changing supply from the National Lending Library for the Blind at Westminster.

It was sometimes possible for each member of a class to have a Braille copy of the book in use, sometimes not ; in any case in one class there might well be some fluent and other halting readers, as well as one or more beginners in Braille, so for reading aloud in class a compromise would be sought ; sometimes, as in a foreign language taken at a relatively slow pace, the mistress in charge would herself read, while the members of the class followed in their own books, so gaining speed with practice.

Class procedure was necessarily affected by problems connected with writing Braille. Two pieces of writing apparatus were important to all Chorleywoodians. First the Braille writing frame : the essential part of this is the metal guide in two parts hinged together, with the paper clamped between them. The upper part with two rows of cells is designed to enable the writer—holding a style and writing from right to left—to press each dot of a Braille sign down into the paper, below which the lower half of the guide is grooved to receive it. The writer must mentally reverse the shape of the letters before writing them, for the paper has to be taken out and turned over to enable the raised dots to be read as in print from left to right, by touch. A blind writer uses the index finger of the left hand to guide the style, wielded by the right hand, from cell to cell. The metal guide is generally used in conjunction with a supporting board with a series of paired holes in which metal pegs under the guides rest as it is moved down after every two lines have been written. This method of writing can be very efficient and, with practice, reach a reasonable pace ; it is the quietest way of writing Braille and so is used by students taking notes at lectures ; but it would be very tiring to use the Braille frame for several hours on end.

The second piece of writing apparatus much used at Chorleywood was the Stainsby-Wayne. In this, too, there is a supporting board to which the paper is clamped after being threaded between the parts of the metal guide or carriage way, but the machine has six keys, corresponding to the six dots of a Braille cell, as well as a key for spacing between words, and the writer presses down—in one movement—all those required to make the dots of any one sign, using three fingers of each hand for the six keys. The keys are crossed in this machine, reversing the dots, so the writer presses down the combination of keys in the form familiar when reading. With a Stainsby-Wayne, writing can be speedy and it is not tiring to manipulate, but it is necessarily noisy. At Chorleywood our pupils

all became at home with the Stainsby-Wayne in good time for use in School Certificate, and many—especially those who learnt Braille late—used it as their first method of writing it.

Braille writing differs from pen and pencil work in several ways calling for adaptations in class management. Braille cannot be "corrected"; a mistake may be flattened, often by use of a finger nail or the wooden handle of a style, but it is unlikely that the correction will fit exactly into the space erased and, in any case, writing over flattened Braille generally results in a confusion of both efforts. There is no room for inserting punctuation marks, nor for putting after-thoughts between the lines of a Braille passage. Also, as has been suggested elsewhere, careless Braille, such as the misplacement or omission of dots, is likely to form a sign with a different meaning. Ideally, therefore, a Brailist should have a very clear mental image of what is to be written before committing it to paper. In practice, we found that our fluent Brailists were adepts at overlooking slips and reading what was intended, as well as being able to read it at any angle, or upside down, or when far too flattened by hard use to be legible by the less experienced.

A mistress dealing with a set of essays, translations or other work in Braille could not write Braille corrections or comments on the spot, so generally made notes of the chief points to be dealt with in class. When it was important that the members of a class should all have a correct copy of the subject matter to keep for reference, it was necessary either to dictate this and to do so at a pace that would enable all to write accurately, or to provide one correct Braille transcription from which they could later make their own copies. Dictation in class involved speaking a passage, including any necessary punctuation and help with spelling, and then waiting while the noise of the Stainsbys took control and until the slowest writer had finished, before attempting to speak again.

Besides the Braille writing frames and the Stainsby-Waynes, the School possessed two Pyke-Glausers and several Braille short-hand machines.

The Pyke-Glauser, named after its inventors, has the advantage of being an upward-writing machine. Its six keys, arranged horizontally in two groups of three with the space-bar between them, when pressed down cause blunt "teeth" to be pressed upwards into the paper, the carriage being placed at the left hand side for the beginning of a line, so producing Braille writing in the form for reading without turning the paper over. This machine made it relatively easy for a blind student to re-read each stage of her composition, or translation etc., and, by leaving adequate space between the lines, to insert corrections and so improve the first draft in the way common to writers in ordinary script. This machine is necessarily too expensive and also too bulky and heavy for general use, but is a most welcome help to scholarly work.

The Braille shorthand machine is also an upward-writer with the six keys arranged as in the Pyke-Glauser and with a long space-bar, but the shorthand is written on paper ribbon about an inch wide, which passes through the machine from right to left. When a writer has finished taking dictation on this machine she may either tear off the used paper and carry it away in a somewhat untidy bundle, often collected in a waste paper basket, or release the metal control on the left of the machine and rapidly roll the shorthand back on to its spool, to be ready for unwinding when transcribed in typing. The Braille shorthand machine is very compact and the new models are much quieter to use than the older ones.

Miss Cunningham, who was entirely responsible for the teaching of Braille shorthand at Chorleywood, describes it as consisting of: 1, Group signs; that is to say a sign consisting of two or three groups of letters; for example, the letter "q" stands for gl, gal, gle, fully, quire, according to whether it is used initially, medially or finally. 2, Word signs: for instance the letter "a" stands for the words an, appear, available. 3, Abbreviated words which follow the lines of the ordinary abbreviations used in Grade I Braille; for example "alv" stands for "alleviate. 4, Phrase signs; an example of this being, aaaa standing for the phrase "at the earliest." The Royal Normal College recently brought out a new book on shorthand published by the N.I.B., introducing new signs which make it easier and quicker to reach such speeds as 120 words a minute and more.

The typewriters at Chorleywood were ordinary ones adapted, as is normal for blind typists, by having a Braille margin scale.

Most of our girls learnt typewriting when in the middle school, on lines closely comparable to those with normal sight, but the early exercises from which they worked were in Braille. There was need for considerable practice in the use of capital letters for, although Standard English Braille provides for capitals by placing dot 6 before the letter to be capitalised, the British habit is to save space by not using this sign—leaving it to the reader to identify proper names and so on without the help of capital letters. To my mind this omission of capital letters in English Braille is a most mistaken practice, adding considerably to the puzzles contracted Braille offers the beginner, and making it necessary for blind typists to depend upon memorising fixed rules in the use of capitals, instead of becoming familiar with somewhat changing styles through reading.

Miss Sharpe, who for some years taught typewriting as well as German and History writes: "The actual learning of the keyboard presents little difficulty for most girls; they learn by the touch method, reaching all keys from set guide keys (a s d f in the left hand, and j k l; in the right hand). The manipulation of the

typewriter is learnt quite easily if each part used is dealt with as the need arises.

Great stress is placed on the evenness of touch, which is essential to accuracy. Frequent and systematic practice is necessary if this is to be achieved. The use of a gramophone is often helpful in developing a sense of rhythm in typing, though in some cases, where little natural sense of rhythm is present, it can prove a hindrance.

The chief difficulty in more advanced work is that of arrangement, but this can be overcome by practice and careful calculation. Letters can be well-placed on the page by a comparison between the number of lines occupied by Braille and the number occupied by typewriting. The same principle can be applied to Braille shorthand, which can be measured in suitable lengths, *e.g.*, arm or desk lengths which can be compared with the number of lines needed in typewriting. The setting-out of tabulated documents is difficult, but can be managed by means of careful calculation."

Typewriting chiefly justified its regular place in the time-table, apart from its vocational use, as a means of writing to friends, relations and others who did not know Braille, but it was used to some extent in school work too, especially for doing "prep" for those teachers who came temporarily as substitutes for absent members of the staff and who did not know Braille. It is obviously unsatisfactory not to be able to read and criticise one's own writing, but the compromise of making a draft in Braille, and typing from this was often practised.

SQUARE HANDWRITING, introduced to us by Perkins Institution for the Blind, U.S.A., was a humble alternative to typewriting, and claimed such odd times as could be spared for its practice. It provided a way to write legibly with a pencil for those who had never seen and therefore had no memory of ordinary hand-writing. It had the one advantage of requiring very simple apparatus that could always be handy—a grooved card, paper and pencil. The paper, preferably rather thin, is clipped to the card which has parallel grooves which, after the paper has been pressed into them, give a guiding background for the writing.

The directions for writing any letter can be very simple; for instance for "a," "top of groove left, down, right, up, reverse, right"; for letters with tops and tails such as "l" "space above down to bottom of groove, right." Manipulation of the pencil and the making of well-formed letters with suitable spaces between the words came easily to some and slowly, needing considerable practice, to others. The left index finger was generally used in close conjunction with the pencil-tip to help control its movements, and to see that about its finger's width was left between words. We had Braille pamphlets giving the simple directions for making the letters (capitals too) on the lines illustrated, so that our blind girls could when necessary refresh their memories about the forma-

tion of any letters. Such writing, when reasonably fluent, does not remain square in general effect, and it develops individuality enough to be acceptable for signatures on cheques, etc., when an indelible pencil or a pen of the stilo variety, with quick-drying ink, can be used.

Work in the Preparatory Department, for boys and girls aged four upwards, was in charge of Miss Dewhurst, an expert crafts-woman, as well as a highly qualified educationist, and in subjects like history, geography and nature study followed the usual lines in sighted schools where individual work with plenty of practical activity is accepted. The children used models, things that could be handled or played with, and outdoor work included the growing of bulbs and seeds, and collecting and naming specimens.

The greater problems arose in the subjects of reading and arithmetic, where there could be no dependence on attractive colours, shapes or pictures for encouraging the mental effort of pure learning. The solution lay in giving a large amount of individual attention; which in turn led to a second problem—how to provide individual occupations of value for the rest of the class, while helping the individual.

The stimulation of individual interest was effected by the provision of puzzles, corresponding to the apparatus of the sighted school. The collective interest was aroused by games which, especially in arithmetic, played an essential part in overcoming the lack of visible stimuli. One such game involved making a circus of the whole form room, with toy animals in cages, and entrance money to be paid at the gate; or turning tables and chairs into a long distance bus, with tickets issued at a booking-office on the journey.

Of puzzles, Miss Dewhurst writes "In reading and language work generally there were various kinds of games. For those who were just becoming familiar with Braille letters, there were puzzles in which one merely had to attach the right letter, and then the right word, to different objects in the room, or to different small objects in a box. Another favourite easy task was to carry out the simple instructions written on each card in Braille: 'Knock twice at the door'; 'Tip-toe to the window' and so on. There were also nursery rhymes with all the words cut out and mixed up; sorting puzzles, involving grouping various names or articles together in the appropriate shop; sometimes the appropriate adjective had to be combined with the correct noun (the *heavy* parcel, the *exciting* game, and so on) or the names of objects (such as pepper and salt, pen and ink) had to be paired. The slips of thick paper, on which these puzzles were Brailled, all had some device, such as the top right-hand corner cut away, to show which way up they must be read.

MATHEMATICS.—The Taylor Board, with its special types, was invented for blind people's use in arithmetic and algebra. The

board is like a shallow, metal, rectangular tray with (on its upper surface) rows of star-shaped 8-angled holes. It has a tray at one end for supplies of type, each piece a metal rectangular prism about $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. long.

This apparatus may be used for many mathematical calculations. The type used for arithmetic is distinguished at one end by a raised bar which forms one side of the square cross section, and at the other by raised dots at two adjacent corners. Each end may, therefore, assume eight different characters, according to the angle at which it is inserted into the octagonal holes, so that sixteen different signs are possible with the one piece of type. These signs are used for the figures from 0 to 9, and for such simple process signs as plus, multiply and decimal point needed in elementary calculations.

Algebra type is distinguished by two raised bars at one end and a raised triangle at the other. This will also provide sixteen signs, which may be used for 'literal' representation and the additional process signs such as brackets and indices which are required in algebra. Most algebraic examples require the two kinds of type.

The Taylor board has much to commend it, but even in the most expert hands it cannot compete in speed with paper and pencil. It cannot of course be used for headings (*e.g.*, f s. d.), nor for writing statements. The type is liable to get jerked out of place in the small emergencies of transit, so we found it wise, when practicable, to correct 'Taylor board work' in class.

The practice of writing statements in Braille, including the results of calculations on the Taylor board, was developed as far as time permitted. The plan of writing the statements alternately on the two sides of the paper, so that the last statement could be read while framing the next, was satisfactory in some ways, and for some purposes, *e.g.*, when simplifying an algebraic expression by removing the brackets.

For graph boards, we generally used a piece of perforated zinc into which small metal studs will fit. The axes are formed by fine string, thread, wire or elastic. The heads of the studs have holes or slots through which string may be threaded after the points have been plotted, in order to form the graph. Occasionally a quilted baize board is used, in conjunction with large-headed pins which are connected by string or thread. These padded boards may also be used with wires, string and pins for geometrical representation.

The Geometry instruments we chiefly used were very similar to those used by sighted pupils, but considerably heavier. A spurred wheel—rather like that used by dress-makers—takes the place of a pencil. The ruler is made of brass and has three studs for an inch, one for the half-inch and notches for the quarters.

The compass needs to be very strong and heavy to support the metal spurred wheel in place of a pencil. The paper is usually placed on a rubber mat and the embossed figures are made to

appear on the under-side of the paper. This means that a good deal of reversing is necessary before a figure is completed. If very firm lines are drawn, pupils are sometimes able to recognise the 'depressed' side of the figure, but the embossed underside is generally used. A fairly large protractor, with notches and raised lines for the degree divisions, completes the apparatus.

The girls with a useful degree of sight used special pencils and paper instead of type and Taylor boards. The pencils were of the crayon variety, suitable for making large black figures on big sheets of paper, clipped to a kind of easel placed on the desk. The easel apparatus was contrived to serve also as a screen over Braille books to prevent partially sighted beginners from looking at the Braille ; it had hinged legs which were unfolded when used for this purpose.

To do justice to mathematics, our girls would have needed more time than is usually allowed to the subject in a sighted school, for the slowing-down effect of the manipulative processes considerably reduced the number of examples they could tackle in a lesson period. But this extra time could only have been given at the expense of such subjects as modern languages or music, that appealed much more to the majority of the girls and in which they could reach high standards. So we let mathematics remain, for most, at a rather elementary, though useful, stage.

GEOGRAPHY.—With regret, but after due consideration, we gave geography only a small place in the school time-table and for many Upper School people none at all. It was a matter of competition for time. For blind pupils to study geography with real satisfaction in methods and matter takes far more time than we felt could be spared for it. To explore by touch the special globes and maps, with the positions of the chief rivers, mountains (and sometimes towns) embossed, was, in itself, slow-going in class-work, whether or not each member was separately supplied. There was not room for the names of the rivers, mountains etc., to be (in Braille) on the spot and Braille booklets were provided to give the key to the symbols used. The mistress in charge would have to see that each child's wandering fingers had found the right place and could find it again, with some sense of its position relative to other places. For one blind pupil with a governess, or for individual study by others to whom diagrams, maps, charts, even in Braille, make a special appeal, geography so approached might well be a fascinating study. Several Elementary Schools for blind children have given the subject much attention with, I believe, good results.

At Chorleywood College the Preparatory Department had a good time with geography, learning about the lives of children and their parents in other lands, with co-operative work in the making of models, exhibitions, and so on. After that stage, its scope depended largely upon the teacher. When, for a while, it fell to my lot, I worked it in with elementary science, arriving at

some knowledge of the cause and effects of wind systems, and making primitive diagrams to illustrate trade-winds, cyclones and anti-cyclones, sometimes in raised dotted lines (the spur wheel pressed downwards on paper resting on a rubber pad), sometimes drawing with a tool, such as a blunt pencil, on to sheets of metal foil, which could be used again if the raised lines were successfully flattened out. After we had made a simple barometer and thermometer, we used standard ones, including the maximum and minimum and the dry and wet bulb thermometers, and we used, too, our own rain gauge, together with observations of wind, sky, etc., for keeping a weather record, which introduced the making of simple charts. Various ideas were tried out for making these daily records quickly, and in a form readable by touch. Thread on linen, patterned with raised squares, was used at one time for air pressure and other charts, after simple graphs had been studied on the metal boards devised for them.

In Miss Matheson's and Miss Wight's charge, geography was more general and more "human," influenced by their historical background. For a while the subject was developed, within the limited time allowed, by Miss Knatchbull, who had made it her special study. It is to her that we owe the big scale map of the neighbourhood, with devices well planned and executed for distinguishing roads, railway and river, as well as our own building and the near villages.

Realising how vague many of our girls were as to the relative position and size of countries, we adapted a few wall maps, outlining the countries with solacqua, a semi-liquid material, which set within a few hours after application, and distinguishing land from sea by covering the latter with very thin gum mixed with a little sand. On this scale, the countries, their capitals, and the seas could be named on the spot in Braille.

In my ambition to make it possible for zealous blind girls to look up the whereabouts of places that were only names to them, we made a set of map indexes, which served as gazetteers, for reference. I doubt if this is greatly valued in use, but it deserves to be, for it took four teams of seven (a member of the staff dictating to six Braillists) working half an hour daily for several weeks to produce those hand-bound tomes!

Later, largely in Miss McConnell's hands, the syllabuses were chosen according to the needs of the particular groups: for some, a general background applied to particular countries; for our shorthand-typist trainees, work on more commercial lines; and during the war there were efforts to make news from the fronts more intelligible.

Amongst the School's many good friends who have transcribed books into Braille, Mrs. Du Val, of Cambridge, was outstanding. She found various ways of making clear raised diagrams and gave



APPARATUS IN USE BY A CLASS DURING "PREPARATION" (1936)

Left to Right—Back Row : Easel for sighted work (Dorothy Agar) ; typewriter (Sylvia Stephenson) ; Stainsby-Wayne (Dorothy Metcalfe) ; Ruby Henderson

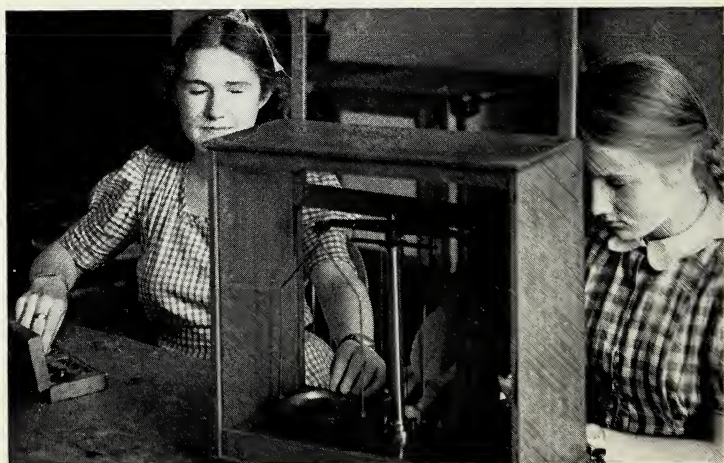
Front Row : Pyke-Glauser (Ruth Darby) ; Braille writing frame (Freda Park) ; Taylor-board (Marjorie Wood) ; Braille volume (Isobel Berrie)



MATHEMATICS APPARATUS IN USE BY A CLASS (1939)

Left to Right—Back Row : Taylor-board and type (Anne Burrows) ; Compass with spur-wheel (Sheila Mattinson and Marjorie Wilson)

Front Row : Taylor-board, Braille writing frame and textbook (Jean Hazelwood) ; easel holding paper for big scale writing (Marie Bridge and Clara Robinson)



SCIENCE : WEIGHING WITHOUT SIGHT (1943)

Left to Right : Dorothy Cordingley, Josephine Jarvis

our blind girls the chance of commenting on her experiments before embodying them in the text.

Towards the end of our first twenty-four years, much of the geography was again taught by one who had specialised in the subject—Miss Gayer-Lownds—and there were prospects that, with the bigger school and increased opportunities for classification, it might win a creditable place for some groups also of senior girls.

SCRIPTURE, ENGLISH and HISTORY teaching need no separate statements in this survey, since the adaptations centre in the use of Braille for reading and writing and the difficulty of making much use of maps ; points already outlined.

SCIENCE.—The equipment for science lessons (elementary physics, chemistry and biology) was similar, as far as it went, to that in other schools, but we used it differently. We had one good physical balance, complete with glass case and weights for measuring to .001 gramme ; it stood up to twenty years and more of handling by blind girls and still told the truth ! For quick approximate weighings, spring balances were used.

In simple experiments there would be several groups at work, but in chemistry, as for instance when studying the composition of water, when hydrogen was passed over heated copper oxide, the class shared the work of putting together the apparatus for a single experiment, and it was carried through with the sense of touch, hearing, smell and sight all employed. Some biology lessons were more of the lecture type, for the use of microscopes for the study of simple organisms, was, of course, impossible. Plant physiology experiments were carried through as teamwork by the girls. Human physiology and hygiene was generally introduced in the Middle School. We had many of the bones of a skeleton, and a few models—ear, eye, throat. The course included the structure and function of the reproductive system, parents being asked by letter if they agreed to the necessary knowledge being imparted in class. They all did.

Rather a big proportion of the time I allotted to science had to be given to dictating notes. This may not have been popular, but it seemed the sensible way of ensuring that the science vocabulary was sound, and a summary of the lessons available for reference.

Reproductions of my simple section diagrams, made with a spur wheel, for re-calling the chemistry and plant physiology experiments, were made by a volunteer, who wrote that he used an old sewing machine for the purpose.

This elementary science work led to the realisation of the interdependence of plant and animal life and other big conceptions, as well as introducing various manipulative processes and special equipment.

We had memorable Lecture Demonstrations on Sound, by Dr. Alec Wood, and on Electricity, by Miss Violet Grant, both

generously giving their time, and leaving behind some of their apparatus for repeat experiments.

From 1930 onwards, biology was taken, and passed with credit, by practically all candidates for School Certificate. The examiners accepted descriptions where diagrams were normally required. The real importance of the subject, however, I feel, was in giving an introduction to the scientific outlook, and in helping the girls to clarify their own thinking and to gain understanding of other people's lines of thought. Chiefly with older groups I read parts of Arthur Thompson's 'Biology for Everyman,' including its last section surveying man in relation to animals, plants and biology. Some of the girls found this so stimulating that they thirsted for more. This led to the school's possessing the whole work in Braille. In print it is two big volumes totalling 1,560 pages, and in Braille it comprises 27 volumes. This marvellous gift was the climax of the work of Mr. Malim, who had previously supplied us with other books he had transcribed into Braille; now, as an octagenarian, he appeared from his letters, to enjoy 'Thompson' as much as we did. I also read to some classes Sir James Jeans' "Stars in their Courses," for giving a sense of the universe to which we belong.

Although blindness is such an obvious barrier to much scientific work on the practical side, I found that some of our girls with no sight had minds as alert to scientific thought as any I had taught elsewhere; and, again, I met the few, although intelligent in other ways, to whom it meant practically nothing.

MODERN LANGUAGES.—The two modern languages taught in the school were French and German. For the most part, both languages were taught to the standard of the Oxford School Certificate Examination, and from time to time there was also more advanced work for candidates taking the Higher Certificate and Oxford or Cambridge or other University Scholarship and Entrance Examinations.

In the teaching of these two languages the necessary adaptations of methods were very similar. Modern language teachers in sighted schools use a very high proportion of visual aids in the early stages of teaching. Actual objects, or pictures of objects, are displayed to the class, and given their new name. Composite pictures are used to increase range of vocabulary. In the teaching of grammar, blackboard work with its emphatic coloured chalks drives home the point of the lesson, and also is an invaluable method for introducing new matter in manageable stages. In a non-sighted school, other methods had to be found to take the place of these.

The following paragraphs, which show how we dealt with these problems, have been compiled from notes on the teaching of German supplied by Mrs. Ham (Miss E. J. Hill), and Miss K. Sharpe, and on the teaching of French by Miss J. McEwan.

In the very early stages, the direct method included touch and movement, and was especially useful in learning verbs, adverbs

and prepositions. As our classes were so small in number, we were able as a rule to produce ordinary objects in sufficient quantity to give each child a sample.

After the initial stages, one had to rely on interest being sustained and vocabulary enriched, through the reading of simple stories, the dramatisation in simple words of known stories, the learning of simple songs. This type of work is of course well known in sighted schools, and there are many well-planned first and second readers containing simple grammatical exercises interspersed with interesting reading-matter and pictorial illustrations, which form a basis for the work mentioned above. The teacher in a non-sighted school had to Braille out the necessary elementary matter for her classes, as nothing existed in Braille to correspond with these excellent elementary readers. This shortage of Braille textbooks will be referred to later.

Nothing can really compensate for the blackboard in the presentation of formal grammar. One could only make the most lucid and simple oral exposition possible, and trust that the blind child's more intense power of mental concentration would help her to grip and retain the essential points. Supporting examples to demonstrate the rules were frequently Brailled out by the teacher, and a copy given to each child after the exposition of matter had been made. The German classes Brailled their own grammar entirely as they went along, and the French classes at certain stages took down a series of grammatical notes and examples, which they kept by them for reference.

At these later stages, full use was made of aural stimulus through the B.B.C. schools broadcasts. Each child had a Braille copy of the text of the language pamphlets, supplied to us on order from the N.I.B. and the text was thoroughly prepared before each broadcast. In French we were also able to make use of a series of linguaphone records. The text, which was available in Braille, had to be methodically and carefully prepared beforehand, as we found it impossible to keep pace in the Braille text with the recorded voices. These records were quite useful from the point of view of enrichment of vocabulary, though from the point of view of interest they could not compare with the B.B.C. talks, which, with their simple and vivid French and their varieties of voice and personality at the microphone, were invaluable as a stimulus.

Little adaptation of method was required in the more advanced stages of the language. Reading of texts, oral work, dictation, translation, followed the usual line of sighted school curricula. One point only need be noted. The small range of text books made it imperative that very thorough use should be made of what was in existence in Braille. This was especially important in the case of vocabulary. A sighted pupil can increase his vocabulary by wide reading, a process which familiarises him with words and phrases through their frequent occurrence. A non-sighted child must make a

deliberate effort of memory to retain new words and phrases when he meets them, as it is not so likely that they will be encountered again in the course of his limited general reading.

The greatest difficulty in the teaching of languages was not, however, the adaptation of methods, but the shortage of text-books. In the early stages, as already mentioned, there was a considerable lack of easy reading matter and simplified grammar. Thereafter, as far as French was concerned, material up to School Certificate standard was, if not modern, at least sufficient; while for advanced work we were able to borrow the necessary copies of set texts from the Valentin Häuy Library in Paris, if the London Libraries were unable to supply our needs. During the last part of the period under review the early stages of French were also provided for by the stereotyping in Braille by the N.I.B. of a good text-book, chosen by specialist teachers of the subject.

In German, the situation was by no means easy. Mrs. Ham, who, as Miss Hill, began the teaching of German in 1930, says: "First of all I had to find suitable text-books, referring to the N.I.B. list of publications. Only one was available, a Grammar by Siepman, which also contained texts for translation into English and *vice versa*. The passages were too hard, or too stereotyped, for a beginner: the grammar sound, but a dense mass of facts—always, however, useful for reference. Therefore, for my class of seven, I decided to Braille simplified exercises in grammar, German passages for translation, short poems, songs, anecdotes, easy unseens, German letters, and so on. I used the Siepman more fully at a later stage; it was always useful as a solid background. Only one dictionary could be borrowed, and I found that at first it was better to make Siepman's vocabularies at the end of the Grammar a basis on which to work. I believe German words in the dictionary were in German contracted Braille. This was a difficulty, because German contracted Braille had to be learned."

The same difficulties existed in 1944, as will be seen from the following quotations from Miss K. Sharpe's notes on the subject: "When formal grammar is necessary, each child makes her own grammar. This is necessary because of the lack of a suitable text-book. It can be compact and contain only essentials. On the whole this system works satisfactorily, but it takes up time that could be used for other more useful purposes. Each child also keeps her own vocabulary, to which new words can be added when necessary.

The chief difficulty at this stage is the provision of simple reading matter as very little exists in Braille. As far as possible stories have to be Brailled before each reading lesson."

Of the more advanced work Miss Sharpe says: "It is usually possible to have set texts Brailled, but other books are difficult or impossible to procure. Sufficient reading round the subject cannot usually be done by the girls themselves. Consequently they are often obliged to rely on the teacher to a greater extent than is

desirable. They cannot gain the independence and self-reliance in work which a sixth-former should achieve."

We ought to emphasise the point that texts borrowed for advanced work were frequently in Grade 2 of the foreign language. This meant that the pupils had to learn for each language a completely new set of abbreviations and contractions. There were some contractions used in all the German Braille books, for instance the German *ie* used the same sign as the English *ing*, *ei* as our *sh*, *ch* as *th*, and so on. In fully contracted German Braille there were a great many more signs to be learnt, *e.g.*, the German *en* is the English *c*, *m* means *man* in German and *more* in English, and so on.

MUSIC.—Singing and musical appreciation classes always formed a much valued part of our curriculum, but, as they required relatively little adaptation, the following comments are on the teaching of the piano to blind children. Use has been made of notes on the subject by Miss Campbell, for many years senior visiting mistress of music at Chorleywood, Miss Partridge, also a visiting music mistress, and herself a partially sighted former pupil of the school, and Miss Hett, resident music mistress, also a former pupil (with no sight) of Chorleywood. All three were experienced, too, in teaching pupils with normal sight.

Many sighted people belong to the class of piano players who are lost without their printed music before their eyes. To such, the learning processes involved in the musical education of children without sight baffle the imagination. Sighted people also frequently imagine that children without sight are naturally particularly musical. But this is not so. Miss Campbell writes: "The proportion of blind children who show a special aptitude for music is no higher than in the case of sighted children. Listen at the doors of the practising rooms. Just the same things go on as in other schools. Keen ones, just getting on with it, going over and over the bad bits, forgetting all else but the work on hand. Others, getting bored with the discipline of set exercises, trying over different editions of chopsticks."

It is true that the non-sighted child starts his musical education with more than one advantage. Being more likely to cultivate the art of listening, he will derive greater pleasure from music than a sighted child with equal musicianship. Miss Partridge, remarking on the tremendous part the sense of sight plays in people's lives, says: "It seems to be so prominent that the other senses are apt to suffer from lack of use. I find that pupils with normal sight are concentrating so much on reading notes that they cannot hear what they are playing. Blind and partially sighted pupils, who do not have to read and play at the same time, do feel and hear when they are making mistakes, as their touch and hearing are more developed."

Again from the point of view of musicianship, it is an advantage to be compelled to know one's instrument intimately by touch from

the beginning. Miss Campbell mentions that playing in the dark is a method used by sighted music students to improve technique.

On the other hand a non-sighted child has many disadvantages to overcome. A child with sight can see for himself, and can set about imitating the position taken up by his teacher at the instrument. He is able to learn by watching the correct movements of fingers and wrists, and to compare what he does himself with what his teacher does. A blind child has to rely very much more on specific correction from his teacher on points such as his position at the keyboard, and great care has to be exercised by the teacher in order to produce a good keyboard sense.

At Chorleywood, every child, whether specially gifted or not, learnt to sing, and to play an instrument. How was this done? Memory work was of course all important. In the early stages, everything was learned by ear, bar by bar, as in the case of a sighted child. The teacher played first the right-hand part, and the child repeated it till he knew it. The left-hand part was similarly dealt with, and finally the two hands were played together. The work for the next music lesson was the practising of this piece of music to perfection. One can imagine the precision of memory required for this, for at this stage there would be no music for the blind child to consult to help out a gap in his memory. Most children were able to fix the new bars in their mind by having a short period of music practice immediately after their lesson, but in other cases the interior ear alone fixed the music in the memory. For this reason, tips for easy and quick memorising were an essential part of the teacher's lessons.

Sooner or later, and the sooner the better if progress was to be made and the more complicated pieces learned, the system of Braille music notation had to be studied. Braille music notation is intimately bound up with theory, as will be seen from the explanation to follow, and a blind child will therefore have to be introduced to formal theory lessons much earlier than the sighted child, who learns most of his theory incidentally in the early stages. This requires a good deal of mental discipline, at a stage when the sighted child can still learn by more attractive methods. Miss Partridge says: "I cannot imagine a sighted child sitting at the piano and having to learn by memory from Braille. If my pupils could not learn from "Off we Go" and "Peter Piper," full of little charts showing where to put their fingers, and plenty of pictures to chalk and paint, I would have letters from parents after the first few lessons saying they could not continue!"

It may be of interest to give a short description of the elements of Braille music notation. The notes of the piano are given the names of letters of the alphabet, and the Braille symbols for these letters are used in the writing of the musical text. The letters used are not the familiar A B C D E F G, but D E F G H I J. The Braille letter D corresponds to our staff notation C, their E corresponds to

our D, and so on. The letter symbol indicates also that the value of the note is a quaver. Other values are shown by the addition of one or more Braille dots under the original letter symbol.

As the symbol for C, a semibreve, is the same as for C a semi-quaver, and the symbol for C, a minim, the same as for C a demi-semi-quaver, the values of the notes in each bar have to be worked out mathematically by the reader as he goes along.

To indicate the pitch of a note the piano octave divisions are used. The first octave is the stretch from the lowest C on the keyboard up to, but not including, the second lowest C; the second octave is the stretch from the second lowest C to the third lowest C, and so on. The position of the note is given by means of a Braille symbol indicating in which octave it is placed. Middle C is thus known as 4th octave C in Braille music notation.

When chords are written, only the lowest note is given a "local habitation and a name," the others being indicated by their relation as musical intervals to the basic note. For example, the common chord of C would be read as 4th octave C, semibreve, with its third, fifth and octave.

All musical signs and expression marks have equivalent Braille symbols and the most complicated pieces of staff notation can be transcribed into Braille. It is from such transcriptions that the blind music pupil has to read his instructions on what he is to play, and how to play it. He gets his instructions bar by bar, first for the left hand and then for the right hand. He has to memorise these separately and then fit them together. And so bar by bar the new piece is learned with an intimate knowledge of its structure that no reading at sight from printed music can give to any but the most advanced musical pupils of the sighted world.

To conclude, I should like to add a specimen of what a Braille music pupil might read in the way of instructions when setting out to learn a new piece of music. It is from the 2nd Movement of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata (2 bars):—

Five flats $\frac{3}{4}$ time.

Left hand. Piano. 4th F, a crotchet, 1st finger, slur.

Right hand. Fourth octave A, a crotchet with its 4th, 5th finger, slur. Bar line.

L.H. 4th E, a minim, slur, D a crotchet, slur.

R.H. 4th A, a minim, with its third, 4th finger. Slur
Natural G, a crotchet, with its 3rd, slur. Bar line.

Instruction in this very necessary subject was given chiefly and most patiently by Miss Cunningham. It was an early discipline which was amply rewarded in later days, giving, as Miss Campbell says "the joyous independence of being able to learn any standard work alone, and using memory all the time."

PHYSICAL EDUCATION.—Miss McConnell, who had charge of the Physical Education from 1935, writes as follows:—

The majority of pupils when admitted to Chorleywood College have had less chance than children unhandicapped by sight defects of developing muscular co-ordination in free movement.

The aims in physical education have been the same as in other branches of education, namely to develop an all-round normal individual, ready to lead a full life. The first step to this end has been learning to enjoy movement, movement however simple, undertaken independently and without fear of the consequences. Until this first step has been mastered, progress in normal movement is impossible, but once bravely taken, new possibilities stretch ahead. The acquiring of accurate skill and the steady progression of skills is all important, until, little by little, muscle control and self control bring an added confidence, and this, in its turn, gives greater enjoyment. With this increase of confidence, many difficulties such as nervous habits of hands and face, postural defects, melt away of their own accord, and only the more stubborn of those remaining need special remedial treatment.

The ability to work on muscular sense, rather than through visual controls, in curing postural troubles is really a great advantage, as, once grasped, the results are accurate and lasting; this takes us another step on the way—the knowledge of one's ability to take the correct and well poised position, without undue tension, giving more self-confidence. At this stage, the girls are able to tackle the ordinary secondary school work on the apparatus. In our gym. we had wall bars, forms, double travelling bar, vaulting horse, spring board, climbing ropes and jumping mat.

We have not developed the use of special aids in our physical education (bell balls, running wires, clapping or other external aids to direction) because these do not develop control through this awareness of muscle movement, and though excellent as far as they go, would never get as far as the slower, more independent, accurate, and, we would claim, more satisfying method of learning by feeling and enjoying the correct way of moving. After the all important first step of simple independent movement is achieved, be it merely springing up and down on the spot, the desire to know more about movement is aroused—the correct use of the arm swing in walking, the intricate structure of the foot used in a light, lilting, walking step. As style improves and stiffness is overcome, accuracy increases, until in running, for instance, the need for external aids to direction has gone, the confident execution of good style free running inevitably carrying one in a straight line.

During 1935 we introduced several new physical education garments, following up the idea that to enjoy active movement to the full, one's body must feel free from restricting clothing. Cotton gym. vests in the school colour of madder, were worn over the brown school knickers for gymnastics, and stockings and suspender belts were discarded. It was not long before the children themselves decided that the same outfit allowed faster running, and it was also worn for Sport-X. Green or madder cotton crepe dancing tunics were introduced for the Greek dancing, which was done barefoot.

The swimming pool remains an annual delight, and gives many who find great difficulty on land their first feeling of free movement. Land drills, in which the stroke to be learned is taught as an exercise to numbers, until the movements of limbs and breath control are automatic, save much time in the water; knowing them, the children can carry on, on their own, in the water until the stroke is mastered, Wright's swimming floats being used by many as a stage towards independence of any aid.

Miss Deavin describes some of her experiences while a resident member of the staff (1926-1944) :—

My attention was first drawn to Chorleywood College by an article in a newspaper at the time of its opening. I heard no more about it until some years later, when I saw in the press that a member of staff offering my own subjects, was needed. I was immediately interested, but considerations of professional expediency held me to the beaten track. However, a repeat-advertisement offered the second chance, and one visit to The Cedars convinced me that here lay my path.

I was appointed on a temporary basis, so that it might be easy for me to withdraw at the end of the first term if I found that I was unsuited to the special type of work. How rich in human experience, varied in scope, and satisfyingly difficult my work would be, I did not then know.

I spent the first week of the New Year (1926) poring over Braille primers, and rattling away on a Stainsby. Having been advised that it would be as well to master Grades I and 2 before I came, I addressed myself to the task with such determination that I was quite bleary-eyed by the time I set forth on my journey, learning the last list of contracted words in the train as I travelled up from the south! It was somewhat shattering to find, as I laboriously began the task of deciphering my first set of essays (a task which occupied every evening for about a fortnight), that there was, unfortunately, such a thing as bad Braille, and contractions to which the primer provided no clue. My work at this time lay entirely with the older girls, who were only too willing to interpret and to make allowances for my own innumerable mistakes.

As I could neither write nor draw upon it, with any ease, I had never cherished any great affection for a blackboard and said goodbye to it without a single regret. When I ultimately returned to a "sighted" school I could find no use for it at all for the first few days, until I remembered that an audience relying both on sight and hearing needs visual aids to supplement the spoken word. Without these visual aids, exposition had of necessity to be much clearer.

A community life is a very full and busy one, and life at Chorleywood provided its full round of expeditions, plays, dances, bazaars, At Homes, long country walks, picnics, and maids' socials, as well as the contacts of games, gardening, hobbies and clubs.

It would be impossible to mention the contributions of each member of staff, but we were singularly fortunate in attracting people of character whose special gifts and personalities enriched the community as a whole—and many lasting friendships had their roots in experiences shared at Chorleywood.

I believe that under the terms of my agreement I contracted to "perform such duties as should reasonably be entrusted to me." Fair enough! The first of these—typical of those to follow—was the conduct of a tobogganing party, twirling perilously down the back slope on a tin tray! It was also stated that "my services should be at the disposal of the headmistress during the whole of the time the school was in session." Rather a rash undertaking in a boarding school with a seven-day week and a twenty-four day! However, the twenty-four hour limit was never quite reached until the blitz of 1940!

We were singularly fortunate both in our own school grounds and the neighbouring countryside. Seldom did we return from walks empty-handed; we got our knowledge of wild flowers, fruits, trees and birds at first hand. The Country Life section of the Crafts Guild soon became my special care.

My subjects were Latin, English and Mathematics and the balance depended upon the needs of the moment. As girls were admitted at all ages and stages, grouping in subjects such as Latin, French and Maths., had often to be independent of form groups. This complicated the time-table considerably, and meant that beginners' divisions in these subjects might be needed at any time. The amount of Upper School work depended upon the examination demands of the moment, and the subjects chosen by candidates for Higher Certificate and University Entrance. Occasionally, too, there were the claims of Froebel students to be considered.

The gradual building up of the Latin department gave me less time for mathematics, and finally my work in this subject was confined to the School Certificate group and a few geometry classes.

Among other responsibilities which eventually came my way, were the offices of Librarian, Editor of the Magazine, patron of the Literary and Debating Society and Sixth Form Mistress. As we were all housed in the same building, and numbers were small, each member of staff held responsibility for a "form" rather than a "house" group.

I was always very glad that English fell to my lot, as it was a subject with infinite scope and universally popular. I look back with pleasure on our literature lessons, and remember the poetry and plays we enjoyed together. I have never met elsewhere such interested and attentive listeners or such spontaneous response. Even those whose academic attainments were comparatively slight, came to the fore here, and took their full share in class discussions. Even before fluency in Braille has been achieved, classwork in this subject presents few difficulties, and when pupils can read for themselves it has few limitations. The majority of our language work was incidental to our reading. We have cause to be thankful that we were spared the multiplicity of books of English exercises with which the educational market has been flooded for some years past. Generally speaking, it was a subject from which we expected—and got—good results in School and Higher Certificate, and some of the girls read English afterwards at the University.

Much of this work was made possible by the ever-widening range of books available both at the Students' Library of the N.I.B. and the National Library at Westminster. One special adventure in English is perhaps worth mentioning. From time to time, adult blind students from abroad would come to us with the idea of becoming teachers of English in their own countries. Two of them became candidates (successful ones) for the University of London's Certificate of Proficiency in English. This examination included several papers on English Phonetics: a hitherto unexplored territory as far as I was concerned. We pursued the subject together, with the added difficulties of Braille phonetic symbols and intonation curves. This was only one of the instances in which I found myself in the position of student-teacher, and there was nothing incongruous in the joint adventure.

Latin presented no peculiar difficulty, apart from that of looking ahead in the case of long and involved constructions. When I first took over, the only available primer was the time-tested Kennedy's "Principia," and there was nothing suitable for the next stage, so that I spent a considerable amount of time Brailleing simple extracts for reading material. In time a new Latin course, Readers and Books of Unseens, were stereotyped so that the fundamentals were well catered for. There were struggles over acquiring the prescribed texts for School and Higher Certificate, but we always managed it, and each year added something to the central store. The completion of the Braille edition of the "Aeneid" was a real landmark. Most of the texts used were not annotated, and we generally made our own sectional

vocabularies and summaries of subject matter. As the subject established itself in the school and the majority of girls—except late-comers—took it in their stride for School Certificate, I became more and more convinced of its importance in the curriculum, and tended to encourage it at the expense of mathematics.

Excursions into Greek were sporadic and utilitarian! Undeterred by my own very slight knowledge of the subject, I learnt with my pupil and plodded through Greek New Testament with one or two students who were going on to read Theology.

In mathematics, as with sighted pupils, much of the earlier number work was very informal and the aid of simple apparatus was enlisted. Such apparatus must commend itself to the touch and have no elusive qualities! The first records were made on the Taylor frame, which is quite acceptable for the shorter type of mechanical sum. With more advanced work the longer examples seem very slow and cumbersome. I always encouraged pupils to do as many calculations as possible mentally, and to take any short cut that would economise in the use of type. In a system which makes no allowance for statements, the significance of partial answers is apt to be lost if calculations are very long and involved. When once a process was understood, I never deemed it necessary to drive it home by long and involved examples. This principle also governed much of the work in algebra. After an introduction to the initial notation and type, pupils tended to evolve their own ways of eliminating as many signs as possible and to reduce the type to a minimum. Experiments were also made in a combined method of using the type board for calculations and writing the statements in Braille; and this method was adopted for public examinations. The principles of graphical representation were explored, not with the idea of getting accurate results, but for the understanding of the system.

The modern trend of maths teaching—that it should be real and practical and related to daily life—made geometry, in some ways, less acceptable to the blind pupil, after the initial exploration. Though the beginners enjoyed the experience of turning through angles, measuring desks and classrooms and experimenting in geometrical drawing with the aid of spurred wheels and notched rulers, quite a number never mastered the initial difficulties of the rather cumbersome apparatus sufficiently to get real satisfaction from the process. There remains yet to be devised a set of equipment which will provide a rapid and efficient method, by which the average blind pupil may produce his own workable figures unaided. Where constructions were not unduly involved, the more mathematically-minded often worked without figures or plotted a few points on a type board and imagined the joining lines. The construction difficulty meant that the more formal geometry of the “theorems” with the figure ready made, proved easier than exercises which involved the building up of figures.

As an examination subject, geometry proved more of a stumbling block than algebra or arithmetic. With partially sighted candidates who were able to use large scale drawings in black crayon, the subject was easier, though some were handicapped by the fact that the field of vision was not wide enough for the whole figure to be seen at once.

Some of the girls passed School Certificate without offering mathematics as a subject; a few others carried on the subject after School Certificate stage, and explored the possibilities of advanced mathematics purely as an interest. We also prepared candidates for mathematics in Part I of the National Froebel Union Teachers' Certificate.

Of the absorbing offices that came my way none was more after my own heart than that of Librarian. The actual handling and storage of books provided at once an outlet for physical energies and a challenge

to ingenuity. The delivery of a set of ten text-books might immediately create a demand for ten extra feet of shelving. Each term the books which were finished had to be stored away and those needed for the next term brought to the fore and made accessible. The office of Assistant Librarian was a coveted one. A Braille book is, externally and internally, singularly lacking in individuality, and out of place or devoid of label is completely anonymous. Fortunately there was never lacking a due succession of efficient assistants to return books to their right places, and detect the unlabelled volumes. There was always the problem of what to do with the book that was seldom used. For years, Catiline's "Sallust," in about seven fat volumes, was moved higher and higher, until one year it asserted itself by being prescribed for Higher Certificate. Originally the library, divided into three bays, together with the large oak book case in the common room, had conveniently housed all our books. As time went on and the National Institute published more and more educational books, every available shelf and cupboard in the building was requisitioned, blank walls in library and common room were filled with shelves, and sections allocated to each subject. The majority were sets for class use, but gradually a nucleus reference library was built up with the help of the services of voluntary transcribers. Single copies of stereotyped classics, poets, and books of general interest supplemented class text books. (A print copy was kept of all text books and books of reference). New Panda volumes—comparable to Penguins—were also welcomed, and eventually needed a section of the library to themselves.

Many of the texts prescribed for School Certificate and Higher Certificate were borrowed from the Students' Library or National Library, as were also most of the general reference books used for Sixth form work. It was frequently necessary to tap every source of supply to make up the requisite numbers. Considerable foresight was needed to ensure that texts were at hand in time. The requirements of girls proceeding to the Universities also had to be catered for. Sometimes a devoted voluntary writer would keep pace with our needs by sending a few sheets at a time, and the loose leaves would subsequently be bound into a volume. Often, too, we supplied our own needs in the same way, and these manuscripts were carefully treasured in spite of the fact that the Braille might be hurried and inaccurate. Much amateur book-binding took place. All examination papers were carefully docketed and stored for future use.

The fiction section of the library was adequately supplied with the more standard works, but considerations of space, and the fact that we relied upon the National Lending Library for a generous supply of fiction, prevented us from adding a great deal to this section.

"Book packing days" at end of term must bring up many memories to all "old girls." On these days—usually the last Saturday—books were packed, labelled and stamped (1d a volume) for return to the libraries and for holiday reading. In the early days, each girl had attempted to pack her own books and the school "crocodile" staggered backwards and forwards to the Post Office under the load. Later the aid of the garden cart was enlisted, but as the load increased, and Mr. Pullen's shop could not accommodate three or four hundred Braille books, the Post Office was persuaded to send its largest van to collect them, and remove them direct to Watford. Apart from this termly exodus, interim weekly consignments relieved the accumulation.

Early in the war the library was used as a dormitory, and the bay bookcases were housed in the front porch and remained there for several years, until a contingent of soldiers from the local camp came in one Sunday morning, and removed them bodily to the common room—as, with our increased numbers, the library was then needed as a classroom.

Before the war, I had embarked upon a complete new catalogue giving the range of each volume—compared with the print copy—a task which required long stretches of time on end. The blitz period provided these abundantly, and during the quieter periods of the long day and night watches of the latter part of 1940, this was completed, up to date. The library then numbered about 5,000 volumes, and as it was scattered all over the building a library trolley and steps were added to our equipment. Owing to the expense of stereotyping and the labour involved in the manuscript, it is always difficult to make up one's mind to discard any Braille volume for which there may possibly be some future use, so that library space needs to be very generous.

In 1937 there came into being the Literary, Scientific and Debating Society—a comprehensive title embracing a multiplicity of subjects. A committee of girls was formed, and the society met nearly every Wednesday. This proved a very good training ground for would-be lecturers, and outside friends were often kind enough to come and talk to us of their special interests and experiences. My chief function, as patron, was to fill gaps at short notice or to provide talks and readings on subjects on which Braille reference books were not available. The Society was, at first, rather exclusive in its membership, but as it gained confidence and experience it wisely opened its doors to lower forms, that they might have experience as listeners before having to conduct meetings themselves.

I suppose that the war came to us much as it did to other boarding schools. After Munich, when hostilities became imminent, the district provided A.R.P., First Aid and Home Nursing classes, and the staff submitted themselves to a series of examinations in these unmemorable and—to most of us—uninteresting subjects. I well remember a last minute revision of my A.R.P. booklet on a lovely summer day in the Wiltshire countryside, on the drive back from the opening of the new buildings at Worcester College.

The first year was a patchwork of apprehension, waiting, doubts and fears, but our normal mode of life remained undisturbed until the blitz began in August, 1940. So far we had taken part in a few very unreal A.R.P. practices and fire-fighting demonstrations, and had become organised as a Warden's Post, which had the result of keeping one member of staff alert for the telephone each night. We had collected a few chairs and old boxes in the cellar, in case we ever wanted to sit on them for a short period but never in our wildest dreams had we pictured raids which would last all night. Now beds had to be provided for all. The first business was to get many tons of coal taken out of the cellars—no easy task—and then to remove the dust and rubbish of ages, before we could begin on the first of our vast and recurrent furniture removals which loom larger than any other physical activity during this period! We moved ourselves—and our beds—up and down, according to the intensity of the raids, and the adaptations necessary for the accommodation of our guests from the N.I.B. I think I shall always remember the long periods of day and night alerts when, in addition to sleeping in the cellars all night—frequently after an alert which began as early as six p.m.—meals had to be served below, and lessons also given in the cellar alcoves. These were apt to be entertaining to pupils, who, as they huddled in groups on the beds might find that they had, within earshot, a choice of Science, Latin, English and French, and might decide to listen to the one which sounded most entertaining or to sip the sweets of all! I cannot remember music or P.T. taking place in the cellar, but every other activity—Clubs, Lectures, Debates and Guides—made its headquarters there at one time or another.

This troglodyte existence needed some compensations, and we often spent the first period of the morning out of doors, so that we had a refresher before beginning the day's work. Before the war, how many of us could say with any honesty that the dawn was a familiar sight? As a warden, one got to know every phase of it as one wandered round and round the Sport-X lawn during the long watches, and heard the owl's cry give way to the chorus of birds awakening, and watched the hedgehogs and rabbits scampering across the grass.

A tribute is due to the girls for their good humour, and ready adaptability to the somewhat circumscribed life of those years. Though work went on much as usual, and examinations were taken and passed as usual, some of the lighter touches were missing. The traditional termly At Home had to be limited to the summer, because of catering and travelling difficulties. Expeditions to London were taboo, and we had to take what entertainment we could nearer home, and make our own, as far as possible. A glance at war time editions of the school magazine shows that nowhere were there signs of stagnation.

Many of the girls had their own particular family anxieties to cope with. Here, I think I must make special mention of Eve John who, having left her family in China just before the war, had to face firstly the loss of her father, then uncertainty as to the fate of her mother and sisters, who had fallen into Japanese hands. It is sad to think that her own untimely death in a street accident shortly after leaving school, should have forestalled the long-hoped-for reunion with her family upon the collapse of Japan.

I myself did not see the advent of peace to Chorleywood. I left in July, 1944, the term before Miss Monk retired.

NOTE.—It was not long before Miss Deavin was appointed to be one of His Majesty's Inspectors, an office which gives scope—on a grander scale—to the many-sided personality we so valued at Chorleywood; for many and various are the educational establishments within her professional horizon.

CHAPTER X

AFTER-SCHOOL CAREERS

ALTHOUGH it was understood by all concerned and put clearly to the parents of prospective pupils, that Chorleywood College stood for a liberal education for its own sake and was not planned for vocational training, we had constantly in mind "What may she become?" and made every effort to find a hopeful answer to this question; and to co-operate in planning, before the girls left, the next stage towards a full life, economically independent whenever feasible.

Amongst the careers of the more intellectual and successful Worcester College boys, the Church and Law professions that were not ripe for women even with sight had led by a long way. A few others with degrees were doing useful, but humble, work, such as Braille copying; others did voluntary social work; a few were teaching, and some were doing massage. These facts are taken from *The First Seventy Years*, a survey of the period which ended in 1936.

It was evident that it would not be a matter of following their trail, and, anyhow, the prospects of girls, especially blind girls, were very different from their "brothers"; for the blind man may very well marry a sighted wife, who may also serve as guide and secretary, and the practice of proposing marriage has not yet passed over to the maidens!

One realised, too, that the "Lords of Creation" were allowed, even expected, to be slightly aggressive in their claims for work—work using their ability; but that "the gentle sex" was required to be reasonably humble in her approach, however resolute she might become once her value was established. Whether or not it "paid" to be pathetic, I do not know, for I believe no Chorleywoodian ever put it to the test. That it is possible for spirited people to *look* pathetic we also know, and that first impressions at an interview count much. For this reason, as well as for general health and appearance, we stressed in school days the forming of habits that would help good posture, cleanliness and clear speech—all contributing to the poise that gives confidence "both sides of the counter." Where, as with blind people, the stimulus cannot come from the actual appearance of others of good standards, causing the once unkempt child to begin brushing hat and collar, manicuring nails and what not, these things must be learnt and practised. Those blind girls are fortunate whose family or friends have the helpful touch and good judgment over clothes, coiffure and powder. It is all too easy for a blind girl, anxious to be like her contemporaries, to lose the dignity she is seeking by mis-applied powder, while her colleagues mis-apply their sympathy and remain silent! A digression from my subject "After-School Careers?" Not quite, for it may be small things that help or hinder the initial launch.

We had every reason to know of difficulties in the way of finding suitable work for blind girls ; experienced people seemed oppressed by them, and to think that higher education would add to these problems a sense of frustration. It is one thing for an experienced adult who becomes blind to return to a position of responsibility where his knowledge and judgment count, and an assistant provides sight, and quite another for one blind from childhood to get the professional experience that brings authority. That had to be faced.

In fact, the lines of thought we shared with the older pupils and their parents, before they converged to focus on a choice, included the following :—

- (i) The work should be satisfying in being worth doing, even though it might be unsatisfying in salary.
- (ii) The handicap of blindness being great it should not be added to by the undertaking of work incompatible with natural capacity—for some, heads, for others, hands predominating. More positively, it should, whenever practicable, have some relation to the work that would probably have been chosen had there been no sight handicap.
- (iii) The training should be more thorough, and the standards reached higher, in order to compensate for inevitable difficulties to employer and employed alike.
- (iv) Special equipment for use during training and in employment should be provided, whenever wanted.
- (v) The position should be made clear to employers and to those in charge during training as to the actual differences between the blind and sighted worker. We knew from experience how, to the bewildered and busy "stranger," the pendulum can swing from expecting nothing, to expecting everything to be possible to a blind person.

We had to dissuade a blind girl from choosing a career for which we believed her unsuitable, for others' sakes as well as for her own, for blind people are few, and employers tend to generalise. A successful appointment makes a pathway for others to follow, a failure may close one.

At the same time, we knew the difficulty of having the right person available at the right time. An employer's interest might be roused, and a vacancy offered at a time when no really good candidate for the post was free.

It was also evident that those girls with even a little sight (though the pupil might be defined as "blind" according to the Blind Persons Act) had the possibility of a number of outlets not feasible for those with none, for a very little sight is a great help in some work dependent chiefly on other faculties.



BRAILLE SHORTHAND MACHINE IN USE
Marjorie Wood (Minor), with typewriter on the right (1939)



WALL MAP ADAPTED FOR TOUCH (1943)
Eve John

Our Ship.

Words by
GWEN UPCOTT.

Music by
ALBERT E. BEVAN.

VOICE.

1. The wind in the rig - ging, A
2. Though skies be o - ver - cast, And
3. Once a - board the Ce - dars, You're
4. Voy - a - ging! Voy - a - ging! It's

PIANO.

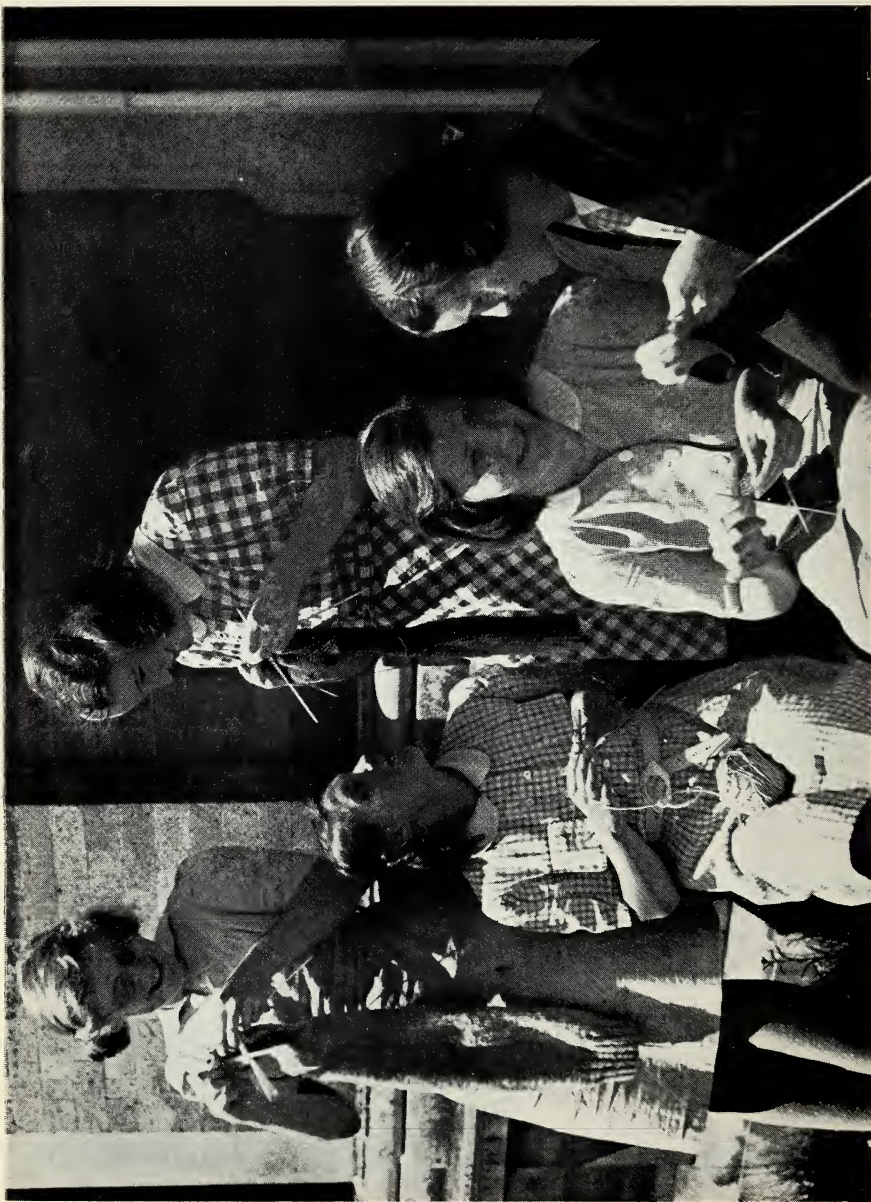
clam - or - ous salt sea, Fair or dir - ty wea - ther, It
land be out of sight, The com - pa - ny I've shipped with Is
ne - ver go - ing back, The wind is blow - ing for - ward, An
not a plea - sure trip, Pas - sen - gers not want - ed, But

mat - ters not to me, _____ For I'm a -
nav - i - gat - ing right, _____ As sea - men
awk - ward wind to tack, _____ You've swung your
if you'll take a tip, _____ You'll join the

float In a sea - go - ing boat, And she won't go down, Not
do When the nee - dle's true, And the ra - cing sea Foams
cot With a pion - eer lot, You'll ve - ry soon get The
crew And steer her through, Here's to all a - board Our

she! Not she! And she won't go down,
white! Foams white! And the ra - cing sea
knack! The knack! You'll ve - ry soon
ship! Our ship! Here's to all a - board

Not she!
Foams white!
get The knack!
Our ship!



FREE TIME: KNITTING FOR THE FORCES (1943)

Left to Right: Sheila Jennons, Betty Jervis, Mary Asar, Eve John, Patricia Hart

We had also to consider the few who came to Chorleywood as a precautionary measure, for sight-saving, whose sight became established enough to be used freely in professional life afterwards.

In all our deliberations the N.I.B. was behind us, not only with counsel arising from experience, and with the provision of equipment, but with support, even when we might have seemed unreasonably venturesome in new fields. There were, periodically, meetings of a small body of N.I.B. representatives, who met the older girls individually, and so had a chance of recognising the personality that is, to my mind, the most important factor in the choice to be made. Where, as with so many, financial help was needed for after-school training and equipment, this was always forthcoming, when the position was made clear, from various sources—the N.I.B. itself, Gardner's Trust, Local Education Authorities, and from the Allen Bequest, which could be used also for the needs, when launching into careers, of the few Chorleywood girls whose degree of sight made them ineligible for help under the Blind Persons Act. The various grants would cover the expense of readers' fees for students at Universities or elsewhere, for, although every effort was made to have available on loan a Braille copy of the printed matter most essential to the course, this was necessarily supplemented by readers from print, sometimes voluntary, but normally at a small fee per hour.

Looking back, I find we have not actually done much in the opening up of new careers. The adventure has been more in the training stage, when we have, when practicable, sought for our girls the same wide experience available to girls with normal sight. Not so in physiotherapy, the profession most keenly followed by a number of blind girls, for the N.I.B. School of Physiotherapy provides the most thorough training, adapted in all ways to those without sight; from there thirteen Chorleywoodians have qualified by taking the examinations of the Chartered Society of Massage and Medical Gymnastics and been launched into successful practices in various parts of England, and one (Hazel Belbin, now Mrs. Moran), in Canada. Others are in training, and it seems likely to remain one of the most satisfying careers to those to whom it appeals, whether going to patients' own homes, treating them in private clinics, or in hospitals. The follow-up of these physiotherapists by the N.I.B. is thorough too, as regards equipment, refresher courses with extra training when advisable, and advice as to vacancies, where more varied experience is called for.

For the first two Chorleywood girls (Elizabeth Ross and Mary Moore, now Mrs. Cranfield) the training, which began in 1927, consisted of massage, medical gymnastics and medical electricity. During the following twenty years the blind physiotherapist has also added the use of high frequency currents to the electrical examinations of the Chartered Society and certain specialised exercises to complete Conjoint.

The problem of getting about to patients in different districts is a very individual matter. To depend entirely upon members of the public supplementing bus conductors, when an address new to the masseuse has to be found, seems to me too much to expect of one totally blind, though a very little sight may make it more reasonable. A young, fit and lightly worked individual with no sight may seek this degree of independence and find it adds a spice to life, but who would not agree (in private !) that it is a considerable strain when the rest of life—work and home affairs—need all the energy available. When it is a matter of going the same way a number of times, the blind girl, who is alert in other ways, gains much by going once or twice with a companion, and making mental notes of turnings, shop smells and so on to help her when alone. But it needs great concentration, sapping much energy, and may leave all too little for activity when working hours are over. The strain is somewhat relieved by carrying the white stick, that makes it clear, without further explanation, that help at crossings or elsewhere will be welcome. But there are many blind people for whom getting about alone in unfamiliar places must remain a major problem, and for whom some plan for a guide is needed. These may be people of high intelligence (it was two of our most academic minds whose bodies bumped most frequently into the staff dining-room table !), who would, perhaps, have had little sense of direction had they had sight, or whose sense of hearing may be impaired, so reducing the power of hearing contrasts as their route passes blocks of houses, gaps, trees, etc. Guide dogs ? For blind physiotherapists and others ? Where conditions can be good for the dog too, this partnership contributes valuably to confidence and general happiness. The guide dog sees to the safety of his mistress, steers her round people, posts and big puddles and waits till the crossing is safe. His mistress must know the way and direct him by word and hand-sign, when alternatives offer, but he is soon likely to guess (and not always right !) where she is off to, and await no signals. As far as my experience goes, these dogs have been so well trained, and are so responsive to their mistress's needs, that they can be trusted to go to a concert, theatre, or film and remain quietly undisturbing—as well as accepting, peacefully, the long wait, where she works.

Teaching—full time school teaching—has been a leading profession for Chorleywoodians, but at the outset we had to pass on the warning that there was little likelihood of the appointment of blind teachers. Although there were blind teachers in our Elementary Schools for the blind whose service was greatly valued, and we knew how much Miss Alice Cunningham's appointment to our staff meant to us, it had also to be recognised that the children needed plenty of exercise and experience outside the classroom, as well as the freshening influences of members of the staff coming with experience in ordinary schools. For a while, therefore, there had been a con-

scious halt in the training of blind teachers for Blind Schools, as openings seemed so few.

Eight girls with partial sight, who had Middle and Upper School education at Chorleywood, have qualified for class teaching and made it their profession. At the Maria Grey Training College four of these girls completed the National Froebel Union Teachers' Certificate, two becoming teachers in Elementary Schools for blind children, the other two in schools for children with normal sight.

Specialisation in Nursery School work at the Rachel McMillan Training College has led two others to successful careers—the one with the National Froebel Union Certificate behind her, after starting in a private Nursery School, has held good posts, including that of Superintendent of several war-time Nursery Schools, with full status and Burnham Scale salary: the other, with the one-year course only, has had plenty of responsibility but inadequate income—a condition likely to be righted soon by further training to gain official status. Another, whose personal qualities made Infant and Nursery School work the right choice, took the two-year training at Fishponds, the Diocesan Training College at Bristol, and has chosen Special School work in the Preparatory of a Blind School. A general degree at St. Andrew's University, followed by training for teaching at Selly Oak, Birmingham, brought to another Chorleywoodian work chiefly in the senior forms of Special Schools. Others are qualifying now, at Universities and Training Colleges.

Those who first entered the teaching profession from Chorleywood have certainly paved the way for others, though it remains essential, to my mind, that there should be conviction—or something near it—that the character of the work and the character of the candidate for it really "belong" together.

The files of correspondence preparatory to the training of the first two of these girls (Dorothy Dent and Dorothy Henwood) were fat indeed—for we urged their training with "sighted" students and getting experience with children with and without sight. It involved winning the co-operative understanding of Medical Officers of Health, of Education Authorities and other bodies as regards the plan itself and the funds for carrying it through. It required considerable friendliness from Miss Johnston of the Maria Grey Training College and her staff, to include in their big establishment two students whose sight needed care, with some modification in their ways of working. It also absorbed time from members of our staff in giving help during their examinations, to prevent the special conditions needed from being a burden to the Training College. Both students had valuable experience and gained good certificates, leading Dorothy Henwood to work abroad, and in a Boys' Prep. School and in High Schools, her natural aptitude bringing her more advanced and more specialised teaching than the Junior Class work for which she was officially qualified; while Dorothy Dent's professional career has been entirely in Elementary

Schools for Blind and Partially Blind children, including a period in Ceylon.

There have, of course, been blind Chorleywood girls with ambition to teach, and with, to my mind, the personality to make a success of it. We realised, however, that most, if not all, the Special Schools in Great Britain had their full complement of blind teachers settled in their posts, and that qualifying for general class work was not practicable. For a few (seven), with scholarly minds, the plan of specialising at Universities was carried through, with the knowledge that, for them, this would be of great value in itself, whatever the vocational outlet might be. They went to Cambridge (Girton and Newnham), to Oxford (Lady Margaret Hall, Somerville and St. Hugh's) to St. Andrew's and to London University (Westfield) and all gained good degrees, while living a satisfying residential College life with their contemporaries.

Teaching adults has, as one could foresee, proved more promising than main school work. Between them they have taken classes at Morley College and at an N.F.S. Station during the war, done a little broadcasting (in Mauritius and at home) and given classes in Biblical Study in a Diocesan Course for Sunday School Teachers. But none of these students has yet become a full-time teacher, nor been able to depend upon teaching to make her financially independent. Of the seven, one married on leaving the University, another chose regular work (proof-reading at the National Library for the Blind), a third, with private means, has lived an independent life, including some travelling; leaving four, upon whom, I believe, the future will call when more specialist teachers are needed for developing adult education. Their launching has probably been postponed only by war and post-war conditions. They are living full lives, doing useful work (secretarial, proof-reading, giving correspondence lessons for Dalvey College, and some Adult Class work and coaching), but are not yet fully using their academic and personal qualifications. Possibly this period of "knocking about"—meeting people and problems—will correspond to some extent to the young "sighted" teacher's first plunges before she finds her feet; for appointing bodies tend to seek teachers proved by experience, not straight from College.

The first student Chorleywood prepared for the University was Janet Park (Alice Cunningham was just upon her University career when she came to us). As has been told elsewhere, Janet's residual sight went suddenly, when she was twenty-one, soon after she came to us. With our younger members, ideas about after-school careers were generally broached at intervals, frequently on walks, when I would change partners, and hear from each in turn something of her hopes. With Janet it was different. I found her sitting on the big lounge in the hall, and one knew she was facing the fact that her life must be re-set. She had the courage, but not yet the goal. With sudden conviction that it would be right for her

in spite of the odds, I suggested working to enter a University with a view to teaching blind children. It became her plan, and she saw it through. We had, of course, the co-operation of transcribers into Braille of essential books, and we had the understanding help of Miss Dobson (Warden of University Hall, St. Andrews), who visited Chorleywood and Janet in particular, before she entered that University. "In Memoriam" from our magazine of 1938 shall suggest the nature of her success, and why, perhaps, we hung her portrait in the library, for she represents the courage we have met outstandingly through our work at Chorleywood College :—

Janet Lauderdale Park was born on the 9th of March, 1901. She left school young after a break necessitated by a fall from a cliff. For a while she was a typist, but by the time she was eighteen her sight had begun to fail. The trouble could not be allayed and grew worse. In January, 1922, she entered Chorleywood College to find a career through Braille. She could still see fairly well, and one who met her in the common room on arrival dismissed hastily a remark she had heard that Janet Park had herself decided to get trained for being blind, knowing that her sight was not expected to last.

Auburn haired, a Scot, vigorous, she had already tasted the gay independence of grown-up life. Early in her second term at the College, she woke to find herself blind. Two memories stand out. First that she decided to make not the slightest difference to her day, except that she asked to have her meals alone for a day or two. Secondly, that it was in the newness of the shock that she determined to work towards a University career.

So, for nearly four years, Janet wrestled with the necessary preliminary work. Nothing came easily to her ; Braille was stubborn under her square, capable hands. She had had no schooling for years and must needs begin at the beginning. She claimed none of the privileges of the grown-up, threw herself into every branch of the school's activities, and by her strength of character became a person to whom we all looked and upon whom we depended.

In December, 1925, she passed Responsions and in October, 1926, became resident at University Hall, St. Andrews. She took her degree in 1929.

Teaching blind children was her aim.

She trained at Jordanhill Training College, Glasgow, and spent the autumn after training in getting experience at the Royal School for the Blind, Craigmillar, Edinburgh. In the spring of 1931 she was appointed to the John Street Higher Grade School, Glasgow, to teach a group of blind children, and to supplement their lessons with sighted children.

Two years later, in 1933, on a visit to Chorleywood, it was evident that a lameness in her knee was becoming a hindrance to her. The malady increased, and in September, 1934, she was obliged to resign her teaching work. She became gradually more and more helpless, able at last to use only her hands. She trained as a proof-reader in 1935, and was appointed to work for the National Library in May, 1936. On February 10th, 1937, she died.

Janet would have been horrified at the idea that she was a heroine. Her absence of self-pity, her silent repudiation of sympathy, were quite incredible. She stood, amidst the storms of defeat that broke upon her, to outward view perfectly calm. There must have been another side to this experience, but we were not allowed to see it. Just a shrug, the deprecating Scots "Och !" and a flickering smile about her lips that

suggested some inner intercourse. No letter of hers ever complained or, indeed, came within a thousand miles of complaint. They were full of humour and interest in the lives of others, and they stated what she was now able to do and what in consequence she was doing. This was the secret, surely, of her strength. That she had the singular courage to lay hold on that which remained every time. Her life broke between her hands. She shifted her grasp, and took it up again.

"And thus the tale has been saved and has not perished, and will save us if we are obedient to the word spoken. Wherefore my counsel is that we follow after justice and virtue always, considering that the soul is immortal, and able to endure every sort of good and every sort of evil." (Plato).

The others who came to us after normal school age were foreign students from Austria, Czechoslovakia, Norway and Sweden, who worked up their English to standards that helped its teaching to be a centre-piece in professional life. Marie (with some useful sight) developed a big organisation of oral classes for children in Vienna; taught adults also through her monthly journal "The Letter" which even in post-war conditions had a circulation of 7,000. The successful teaching of languages by those with no sight, too, supports my belief that this career may be developed further. Mildrid, a Norwegian, had good German and French too, and made me dream dreams of some exceptional Chorleywoodian becoming an interpreter.

Music—teaching and performing—had long been recognised as a career open to blind people. Students from the Royal Normal College and elsewhere had established its success. From the school's first days we experienced the big place this form of art, whether by playing, singing or listening, held in the children's minds and hearts; and it has remained an enthusiasm for many whose educational background has helped them to listen with real appreciation to chosen programmes of great music from all times. Music as a profession has been chosen by four of those who reached the Upper School at Chorleywood. Joan Partridge led the way to the Royal College of Music. Her sight enabled her to use some ordinary notation as well as Braille. She gained her A.R.C.M. (Teachers') and has had a successful career, chiefly teaching piano as a visiting mistress to schools, including ours, for blind, partially blind and fully seeing pupils. There are many Chorleywoodians, especially some with an extra obstacle to overcome—general tension, awkwardly formed hands—who will always be thankful for her ability, through musicianship and human understanding, to help them reach good standards, satisfying to themselves and to those to whom they played.

Elaine, with no sight, who followed in 1934, studied piano, organ, flute and conducting at the Royal College, and also gained her Teachers' A.R.C.M. Her general alertness, working through hearing and a developed "pressure sense," combined with the spirit of adventure, led her to get about London alone, and to add

to teaching experience gained during training a few months in Cyprus teaching music to blind boys, travelling unaccompanied. Then the war changed the character of her enterprises, and she spent it largely as an organist, first in Cheshire, and later, for a while, in Surrey, whence she became free to fill a gap on the music staff at Chorleywood, exercising also, as elsewhere, her early allegiance to the Guide Movement. Of the other two, one—as my part of Chorleywood's story ends—is still studying (with Musical Criticism as a special subject) and trying out lecturing to educational organisations and Music Clubs—with her guide dog to add to her attractions. The fourth, with a Performers' L.R.A.M., and various medals of the Royal Academy, proceeded to marriage, so that her career, while the family is young, requires quite other art.

Marriage? Of the sixty-six girls who became Upper School folk at Chorleywood, seventeen have married, and two others from those who left early. Twelve of these have partial sight, and seven have none. With one exception, these girls have married men with normal sight, and, again, with one exception, the children are fully sighted. This means, I believe, that medical opinion was sought before making the decision to bear a family, and that in many cases the health histories of the mothers offered few problems to the doctor as far as heredity risks go. That the claims upon their vitality are great, no one will doubt who has seen what motherhood means, even to those without physical handicap, in these days of domestic difficulty. Taking for granted understanding co-operation from the husband, I imagine that both partners have the best chance of some reasonable relaxation when part of the house-work and over-seeing of the children is deputed to a third party, and the blind wife sees through her own share in her own way and time, knowing that the "tools" will be where she put them! It has, in some cases, been practicable for the wife to carry on her profession after marriage, and so contribute to the cost of help in the house.

Running a house as a profession—not as a wife—may well, I think, make a good career for more girls with partial sight. In these days of enlightenment about relative values, trained intelligence in the housekeeper, when combined with good humour, stands high. A partially sighted girl, with a liberal education and preferably some specialised training in housewifery, could run someone else's flat (or house), and justify the status and salary good work deserves. The problems of bad sight would be much reduced by practice, and responsibility for seeing the work through, without the continual detailed directions of the bad old days, would bring the expert's satisfaction.

So far, besides the school classes in housewifery—including the elements of cooking and laundry-work—that formed a small part of the curriculum of most of our girls, four have studied Domestic Science at Training Colleges, carrying off good certificates; these qualifications have, for two, formed the basis of careers in schools

and hospitals and for the other two have been a background to home claims. Three Chorleywoodians with such official training have made home-making their livelihood, without becoming cut off from other interests that contribute to a good balance in their lives.

Such work leads me to tell next of the few, all with some useful sight, who have ventured into Social Service in other spheres. Two girls qualified at the London School of Economics, a third studied at Manchester. Our pioneer, Joan Paterson used this background (Sch. of Ec. : Certificate in Social Service) to take a series of relief posts as a hospital almoner, and then became a Health Insurance Inspector, another post giving opportunities for understanding help to those in difficulties. Moral Welfare is the absorbing office of a student who qualified during the war years. A third held posts for the Ministry of Labour, and in connection with the Milk Scheme, until her work became increasingly adapted to family needs.

That hospital nursing became the profession of two Chorleywoodians illustrates several points in the school's history. These girls have useful sight, which was considered somewhat precarious when, to secure a Secondary School education, they came to Chorleywood College. Their sight appears to be well established, the defects which remain they cope with successfully. To follow our first nurse : she entered the profession through sanatorium work, taking the Certificate of the Society of Superintendents of Tuberculosis Institutions ; she later became State Registered after general training, and has chosen work in Orthopædic Hospitals. Her capacity and her enthusiasm for the work have entitled her to good conditions within it. The career of her choice needed more keen workers, and so such handicap as she had, though realised, was not made a barrier to her entry. The fact that she was educated at Chorleywood College, with its sub-title "for girls with little or no sight," has not diminished confidence in her. Chorleywood's aim in providing a liberal education was in process of fulfilment. None of our girls, once launched, has been defeated by her sight handicap, and nearly all have embarked within a few months of completing training.

Home teaching, a title that envelops so great a range of social service for blind people, occupies two Chorleywood girls ; several others hold the Certificate of the College of Teachers of the Blind, but are doing other work. Following the first, Margaret Macara, brings Occupational Therapy into the picture ; for having previously passed the home teachers' certificate while still at school she qualified for this profession at a Mental Hospital in the days when it was seldom practised elsewhere. Her first post was at a residential school for children with mental and physical problems, and since then she has been engrossed in the home teaching service. That she will be the fore-runner of other occupational therapists and of more home teachers I have little doubt, for, at Chorleywood, we

found the girls' own handicaps developed imagination for other people's, and a real desire to work for their amelioration. At present during the post-war period, that plans great things but is hindered by shortage of "essential" labour, the entry of blind people is probably limited by the need to organise the work of a hospital or district, in order to give the blind member of the staff a full but specially chosen share. When the social services become better staffed, the value of the keen blind worker, especially in actual teaching of pastime handicrafts, Braille and Moon, etc., may well become more widely recognised. Meanwhile, those with partial sight carry on in the home teaching service in areas where the distances to be covered do not necessitate a car.

In this, as in the nursing profession, there is likely to emerge a way of enabling experience and training to start earlier than has been the normal practice, so that those leaving school with a real bent for such work may not have to be diverted because they are too young.

I am tempted, in my writing, to include our farmer in the social workers, for she cares for the animals' well-being and for that of the public. After periods of training in both dairy and poultry-work she has held posts in both that have meant good work and plenty of it, and now she is working her own poultry farm.

I should expect general farming, too, and some forms of horticulture to draw more girls in the future, perhaps qualifying for responsible posts at an Agricultural College; for although, as has been said elsewhere, Chorleywood College is not likely in the future to be needed for girls who can manage print reading, less sight than that goes a long way in a practical job, when there is an intelligent trained mind behind it. Some of our girls have found a strong magnifying glass useful, when dealing with printed forms, telephone directory and so on.

Another venturer, so far without successor, trained in Flower Decorations at Mrs. Spry's School, and gained the Royal Horticultural Society's Diploma in Floral Art. For a short while she held an appointment under Mrs. Spry, but ill-health intervened, and has made all work sporadic.

Church work in Canada holds another of the girls with a little sight. She trained for Church work at St. Christopher's College, Blackheath, and then took the Archbishop's Diploma after working at London University. Another Chorleywoodian has been on a panel of preachers for the United Methodist Church. There have been others, too, who would have wished to put church work first, but for whom it claims time only after the earning of a "security income."

It has been this need for security, or rather for independence undelayed, that has influenced a number of our girls who left school during war-time. A University career, so right in itself for the scholar, was still a shot in the dark. It might still necessitate a

humble job, possibly with further training, to follow. During this period two girls with no sight, went to Westfield College, London University, and to St. Hugh's College, Oxford, respectively. With Honours Degrees in History and in "Modern Greats" (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) behind them, they are earning their bread and butter as shorthand-typists, keeping alert meanwhile to more satisfying opportunities.

Others trained at school for secretarial work, taking the examinations of the Royal Society of Arts. This attack was new to Chorleywood. We realised the excellence of the work done by students during long and thorough training at the Royal Normal College for the Blind, but decided to treat our few candidates to a short course, counting on their previous grounding in English and in steady typewriting. It worked. Of our first candidates, (Doris, John and Marjorie Wood), entered experimentally, and passed, both Intermediate and Advanced Typewriting and Braille shorthand at 100 words a minute in the spring of 1939, after having been "academic" people working at Higher Certificate and London University Proficiency in English the summer before. We approached several friendly organisations, including the College of Nursing, the Womens' Employment Bureau and the Institute of Almoners, to give these girls short periods of experience. They fell in with this plan, and so helped the trainees and also spread the knowledge of their methods. The N.I.B. has given others, too, experience in office routine. For "paper qualifications" we turned later to the Shorthand-Typist's Certificate, which needs little adaptation for blind candidates. Seven of the girls, three of them blind, who left school before 1944 are doing secretarial work.

At the beginning of the war, conditions did not encourage employers to try out blind typists, and the first appointments were with those who knew their ways. But as the war advanced, opportunities grew and they filled posts in London, through the blitz and after, in a way that has led to a call for "more blind typists." No sensible blind girl will apply for a typist's post unless she is accurate, with sound spelling, and good powers of concentration. She cannot correct slips, and cannot, after an interruption, look to see what she typed last, so extra concentration is needed to avoid both difficulties. It is generally big offices (Government or business) that can be sure to have full-time work for a blind shorthand typist, and this may mean working in a pool, where the work is too stereotyped and too disconnected to be interesting, and noise and interruptions increase the strain. But these problems are becoming recognised; good shorthand-typists are scarce, and it is found practicable to arrange the work so that the conditions of a private secretary are more nearly approached—typing in a small room and doing the work for one or two people only. One of our girls has recently become the only shorthand typist in an old-established firm. She acts as secretary to its three directors, with

the head of the General Office to provide her with the necessary technical details, while she is learning more of the business. Such team-work points to a future when more educated blind typists may work up to responsible posts, in which their intelligence and initiative will be freely used—posts carrying a salary which might, if necessary, cover calls upon the sight of an assistant. Just as the N.I.B. provides the special equipment (Braille shorthand machine and Braille scale for the typewriter), I believe the Institute would also help, financially if necessary, during a period when an employer was giving time for a blind member of his staff to learn the ropes for a higher appointment; for the N.I.B. stands for “sight for the blind” in more ways than one, and realises how greatly increased power of concentration and retentive memory support the judgment of a blind person in authority.

For a blind woman of education, character and ability to remain one of a number of shorthand-typists, (perhaps young things who come and go), is a solemn matter, more so than for her sighted counterpart. All honour to her, and to the many others who do tedious but essential work well, cheerfully and long. The world depends on such workers, and they deserve the peace of mind this knowledge should bring. But the snag comes if, at the end of the working day, when effort, not interest, has kept the mind on the job, too little vitality is left for the contacts with friends, books, music and so on that could contribute to a fuller life. Like many others, I had hoped that those, with or without sight, whose work is hard but mechanical, would have relatively fresh minds to bring to their spare time. But I fear it is otherwise, as intelligent people who did full time factory work during the war will also know. Later, when the need for increased output is not so urgent, one hopes this will be compensated for by somewhat shorter working days.

A little sight is helping other Chorleywoodians to more varied secretarial work—filing, minute-taking, and dealing direct with correspondence. Employers soon get used to the muffled tapping of the Braille shorthand machine, and look for a normal day's output. One cannot summarise the problems due to partial blindness, they are so individual in kind, varied in extent and so differently overcome.

Telephony, working internal switchboards for the Ministry of Labour, Council Offices, Hospitals and business firms, became, during the war and after, a satisfactory opening for a number of blind people, including six Chorleywoodians. Training has been chiefly at the N.I.B. School of Training at Oldbury Grange, Bridgnorth, followed by a few weeks experience under the expert blind telephonists at the N.I.B.

Besides manipulating the switchboard, a telephonist must be able to take rapid notes on a Braille shorthand machine, and to type these when messages are phoned. She therefore wears headphones that her hands may be free. For those already familiar with

typewriting and with Braille reading and writing, the training can be quite short—a few months at the most. The switchboards have, of course, audible signalling and, typically, ten lines and fifty extensions, or, the smaller ones, five lines and twenty extensions.

We all know the magic effect upon ruffled nerves when, at the telephone, the efficient operator with a pleasant voice takes us in hand. In this way, too, the blind telephonist has the chance of making good contacts for and within her firm.

Individual blind girls from Chorleywood have also experienced Propaganda Work (for the welfare of blind people); training in elocution and speech therapy, Braille proof-reading (including Hebrew) and transcribing into Braille, as well as, during the war, various forms of factory work.

War work for those with some sight has included that on a First Aid Post; for the W.V.S.; V.A.D. work for the Navy at home and in Ceylon; for the Ministry of Information in India and as a W.A.S.B.I. in Burma and as a N.A.A.F.I. at home and in France.

Individual Chorleywoodians with some sight have trained and taken posts in kennel work, in a public library, as a radiographic technician, as a chiropodist and in journalism.

Six of our girls left, without reaching the top of the school, to train elsewhere in machine knitting and other forms of hand-work, several of them coming under the Home-Workers' Scheme.

"Too good sight for Chorleywood" caused the early transfer of four children, for whose future we must not therefore take any credit, and a few left early because they needed more individual teaching.

Thirteen girls from our main school have made their lives in their homes. In some cases the possession of independent incomes has influenced the choice, in others ill-health or lack of general stamina has prevented them from being responsible for regular paid work. And there were six girls whose loss of sight had been part of more fundamental trouble, who died before reaching school-leaving age.

I have, in this review, had in mind, and accounted for, all those girls and grown-up students who had moved on by 1945, after times long or short at Chorleywood College. They total 120.

I have restricted myself largely to facts and figures in an attempt to clarify the position at the time my successor took charge of the school that was bursting its bounds—the Grammar School of the new Education Act.

This account has been written dispassionately, although I have often been moved by the reactions of these girls to the obstacles they have met; it has seemed wise to be business-like in describing the lines along which Chorleywood girls have held their own in a world organised for those with sight, and to keep the telling of

entertaining or frustrating incidents to the times when a few of us are gathered together.

Beyond the ways of earning their living, after-school careers have of course been lit up by individual activities—swimming, rowing, dancing, walking, acting, bridge-playing, evening classes in current events, literature, languages, cookery, etc., while music, plays and films, reading, knitting or other forms of handwork, and wireless programmes appeal to the majority.

To the question "Would you not, in after-school days, prefer to live and work in communities organised for blind people?" the typical answer of a Chorleywood College girl would be "No. That might be simpler, but I want to meet people of all sorts of interests and to progress as far as I can with them."

"You'll get there in the morning," was the first song of the first term. I hope the wayfarers have the same conviction as I that this is proving true. You'll get there! Where? To affluence or ease? No. To independence of character, putting first things first? Yes.

Is this the conclusion of the story of the first years of Chorleywood College? It would, I think, form a true and, in most ways, a satisfying conclusion, but let it rather be read as a prelude to the school's future history and the last words be from my letter in the School Magazine of 1944—a hail and farewell:—

DEAR PUPILS, STAFF AND PARENTS—PAST AND PRESENT,

My farewell is made happy in the knowledge that the school is built of friends; that the spirit of friendly co-operation we have enjoyed through my twenty-four years in its service is awaiting my successor, Miss McHugh, and will remain to colour the new life I am venturing upon on retirement at Christmas.

Since the launching of the little school in 1921 the common handicap has brought together personalities so divers, with backgrounds so various—in health, wealth, experience and outlook—that all have been enriched by the understanding grown of living together. I count my riches greatest having lived here the longest! Of my colleagues, I would name four, among the many who have allowed Chorleywood so to keep and to hold them that the years braced by their guidance will remain a vital background to those that follow: Miss Upcott, for eighteen years our poet, philosopher and friend; Miss Hallam, whose standards as matron for our first ten years could scarcely be surpassed; our versatile Miss Pope, who added her human touch to all she dealt with during her ten years (even to poultry and typewriters!); and Miss Deavin, librarian and sixth form mistress, who has uprooted herself after eighteen years of giving and getting hard work and true, while strengthening her form as leaders, and in preparation for careers beyond school.

I realise too, with thankfulness, what good friends the school has had on its domestic staff, outstandingly during these war years, when conditions might have caused less stout hearts to quail!

From the girls for whom our school exists, I will not select names, but we have reason to be proud of distinctions won and of posts held, and even more of the courage shown when confronted with difficulties more obstructing than blindness.

I salute as the one largely responsible for the support of this school, even for its survival through an early crisis, Captain Sir Beachcroft Towse, V.C., Chairman of the N.I.B. Council and of our Governing Body and champion of Chorleywood throughout these years.

And now it is my turn to hand over the charge of this school, for the inevitable reason that I am about to be sixty, and after so long absorption in the one community, however dear, there is risk of my becoming buried too deep for putting forth new shoots; and that would be bad both for me and the school! So I must look forward to living other lives (first probably as "domestic-gardener and mother's help" for there are two baby evacuees at my home!). I count on having leisure for books, papers and people, and so to feel more closely in touch with plans for the brave new world. Later, who knows what dormant shoots this period of "rest" may nourish?

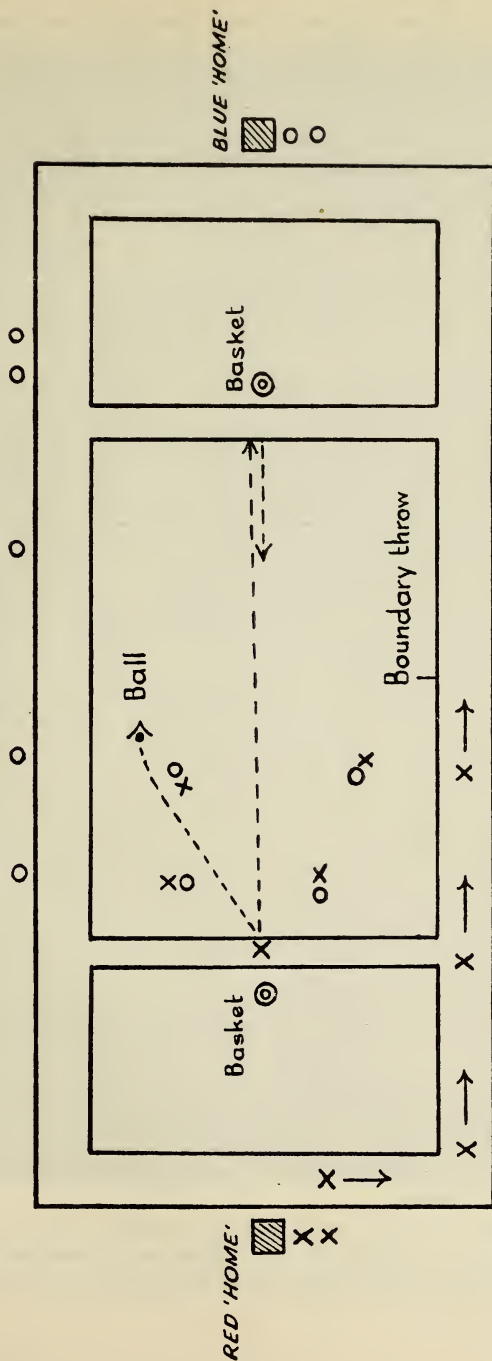
In January Miss D. McHugh will take the reins with a school of sixty (the maximum this building can hold), a school of recent rapid growth, and surely very ready to grow new traditions to add to the best of the old. To introduce her as a Master of Science, Gold Medalist, the holder of diplomas in Theology and Education would be true but misleading, for these distinctions seem casual appendages only to Miss McHugh herself, and to the essential part of her that has drawn her to throw in her lot with Chorleywood. Her interest was first aroused seven years ago when, as chaplain at one of the F.U.W.C.S. camps in Ireland, she met several of our girls. I am sure she will bring in new life while cherishing the old. There need be no break in the contacts of past and present. Old Girls are still invited to suggest to her when they can visit the school on the old terms; and, as is made known in this magazine, a Silver Jubilee Reunion is planned for July, 1945, when Miss McHugh and I will both be here to welcome you.

This issue of our Magazine is winding up with "Our Ship," both the words and the music, that you may have your own copies of the song with which the toast to the school is sung each January 19th at the birthday tea table.

PHYLLIS MONK.

This book, too, brings to its readers our school song, which we once translated into Esperanto to suggest that its spirit is for all times and places where there is a call for courage in thought and action.

Diagram of Sport-X Field



Sport X is played between two teams of eleven players. Four of these must have sufficient sight to follow a football, and are called Fielders, the remaining seven need have no sight, are termed Runners, and are numbered 1 to 7 and play in that order.

The ground consists of a field about 80 yards by 40 yards surrounded by a wide path of gravel or other hard surfacing, and crossed by two small paths about 25 yards from either end. By the centre of these small paths stands a basket, and at either end of the ground is a "home" or "base" and a basket for tapping to help give direction to the runners. The Runners collect at their respective "homes" and the Fielders pair off with their opponents in open field as in netball. The teams wear distinctive colours, *e.g.*, Red and Blue.

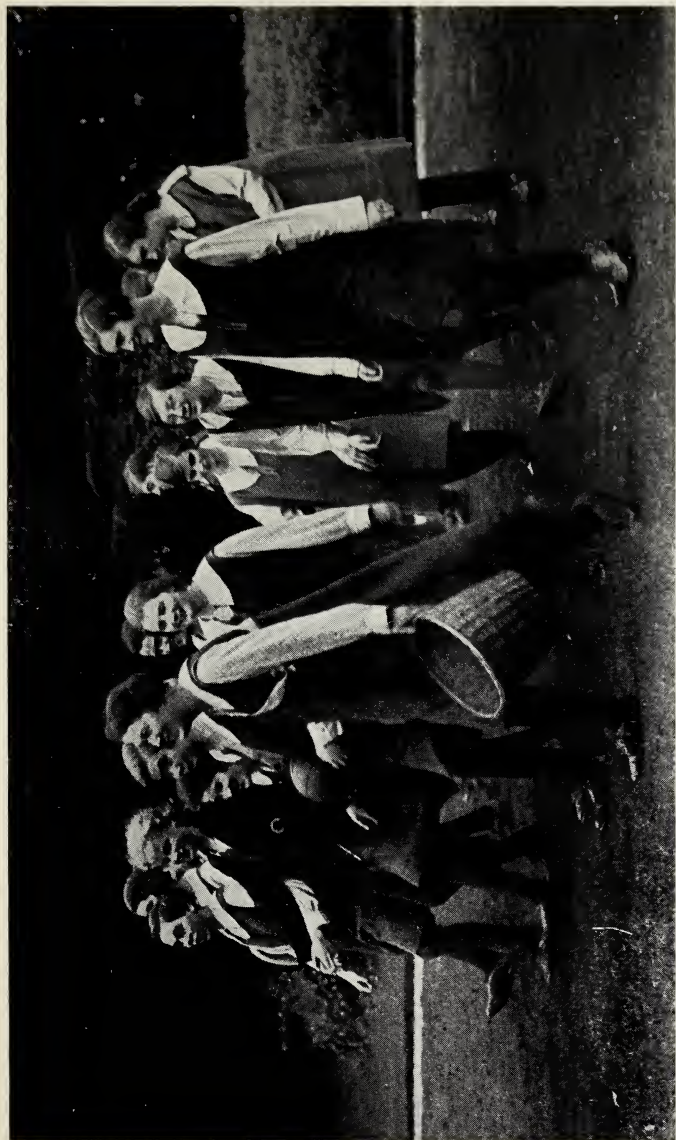
The game is started by the umpire calling Red No. 1, and this player then comes forward to the centre of the small path and takes the football; on the whistle she throws it into the field in any direction and begins to run down the centre of the field to the opposite small path. She continues to run between the small paths as long as the Fielders can keep the ball in play, thus scoring runs. The Fielders on the Red side keep the ball in play by batting it with one hand or kicking it away from their opponents in any part of the field—the Blue Fielders endeavour to pick up the ball with two hands and place it in their basket, when the whistle stops play, and the Runner No. 1 returns to the "home" towards which she is facing. During this play remaining members of the Red team start to run round the outside track, scoring one each time they pass a "base." They stop on the whistle, stepping off the track to wait on the outer edge for their next turn, when they continue on round from that point. As they have to be back at their base when their number is called, Nos. 2 and 3 usually remain at their base until after their throw.

The Fielders re-form at the opposite end and Blue No. 1 is called and the Blue Runners score round the track and the Red Fielders endeavour to pick the ball up and put it into the basket at their end. No. 2 Red is then called and so on alternately both on the field and on the track.

Should a Runner succeed in running 4 times between the small paths, the whistle stops play, and 6 is added to the Field score instead of 4.

Should the ball when thrown reach the side track beyond the half-way mark without being touched by a fielder, it is called a boundary throw and 3 is added to the Field score without being run, and all the Runners on the track at the time may continue on to the next "home."

The Runner scoring on the field should be given the right of way between the small paths, the fielders being penalised for obstructing her, one point being taken from the score of the offending team.



GROUP GOING OUT TO SPORT X (1925)

Daily Mirror
Left to Right : Dora Layzelle, Joan Partridge, Hazel Winter, Dorothy Dent, Hermione Wyness, Freda King, Phyllis Hopson, " Freye " Picot, Ethel Turner, Dorothy Henwood, Vivie Orman, Betty Bloomer



A SPORT—X TEAM (1929)

Left to Right—Standing : Violet Bellis, Elaine Hett, Barbara Fletcher, Betty Chapple, Joan Paterson, "Pat" Dawlings
Sitting : Susanne Murtagh, Muriel Bell, Peggy Campbell, Betty Penson, Mollie Hayman

Should the ball roll off the field on the side track at any point the whistle stops play. If it went off a Fielder of the scoring side, the score on the field for that turn is cancelled ; if it went off the opposite side, the Runner is given the run she was completing as well as those she had scored.

The ball used is an Association Football size 5, though size 4 can be used.

During play a tapping sound is kept up at either " home " to help the Runner keep a straight course.

The game is usually played 15 minutes each half, the second half continuing in order where the game was stopped.

ABBREVIATIONS

- (B)—No sight ; (P) Partial sight (from very slight to a useful degree). (M) Myopic (very short sight, greatly compensated for by glasses).
 C.—Certificate.
 S.C.—School Certificate.
 H.C.—Higher Certificate (with No. of subjects added).
 N.F.U.—National Froebel Union.
 R.S.A.—Royal Society of Arts.
 R.L.S.—Royal Life Saving.
 VI, Intermediate ; VII, Advanced ; VIII, Finals Grade of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.
 N.B.—Less advanced examination successes are not given.
- C.S.M.M.G.—Chartered Society of Massage and Medical Gymnastics.
 L.R.A.M.—Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music.
 A.R.C.M.—Associate of the Royal College of Music.
 U.—University.
 Coll.—College.
 Tr.—Training or trained.
 W.E.A.—Workers' Education Association.
 C.T.B.—College of Teachers of the Blind.
 Worcester Coll.—Worcester College (for blind boys).

APPENDIX B

Alphabetical list of all pupils at Chorleywood College between 1921 and 1944, with summary of careers.

(a) Pupils who had left by the end of 1944.

(b) Pupils who had not left by the end of 1944, with examination successes up to that time.

Name	Period	Successes at Chorleywood College	Career after leaving Chorleywood College
(a)—			
Agar, Dorothy (P)	...	...	Shop Assistant. Died 1945.
Bairsto, Stella (B)	...	...	Died 1931.
Barrett, Nina (B)	...	...	War work in factories. Telephonist.
Beard, Kathleen (P)	1934-37	...	Married.
Belbin, Hazel (B)	1927-31	...	C.S.M.M.G. Physiotherapist. Married.
Belbin, Hazel (B)	1928-42	S.C. ; H.C.(4)	Runs home as Guest House.
Bell, Muriel (P)	1931-36	...	At Royal Academy of Music gained L.R.A.M.
Bellis, Violet (B)	1931-37	S.C.	Married.
	1928-32	Matriculation (Durham U.)	
	1926-30	...	

<i>Name</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Successes at Chorleywood College</i>	<i>Career after leaving Chorleywood College.</i>
Berrie, Isobel (B) ...	1929-39 ...	S.C.; H.C.(5); Entrance to Westfield Coll. ...	London U. (Westfield); B.A. Hons. (History). During war took classes under W.E.A. and did factory work. Shorthand Typist. Housekeeping (own home).
Bloomer, I. C. (Betty) (P)	1921-26 ...	... ..	At Maria Grey Tr. Coll. gained N.F.U. Teachers' C. School Teacher (blind pupils).
Bonham, Mary (P)	1928-35 ...	S.C.; Part I N.F.U. Teachers' C.; Piano VI, VII; Trinity Coll. of Music Teachers' C ...	Assistant in Public Library. During war N.A.A.F.I. On staff of Agricultural Executive Committee. Assistant Manageress of Hotel.
Bridge, Marie (M.)	1938-42 ...	S.C.; Swimming: R.L.S. Inter. C., and Bronze Medallion ...	At Royal Coll. of Music gained A.R.C.M. Music Teacher (sighted pupils). Died 1937.
Burrows, Anne (B)	1933-40 ...	S.C.; Piano VI, VII; Swimming: R.L.S. Inter C. ...	C.S.M.M.G. Physiotherapist. Died 1925.
Campbell, Peggy (P)	1926-30 ...	... ..	Domestic Science Tr. Coll. C. Nursery School Tr. During war Civil Nursing Reserve (Naval Branch). Chiropodist. Died 1927.
Carter, Heather (P)	1932-42 ...	S.C.; Swimming: R.L.S. Inter C. and Bronze Medallion ...	Oxford U. (St. Hugh's) B.A. Hons. (English). School Teacher (blind pupils).
Catley, Enys (B) ...	1923-24 ...	... ..	C.S.M.M.G. Physiotherapist. Married. Tr. in Dairy and Poultry Farming. Poultry and Dairy farm worker; now runs own farm.
Chapple, Betty (M)...	1926-31 ...	S.C. ...	
Collis, Muriel (B)	1921-24 ...	... ..
Cunchiffe, Hilda (B)	1921-33 ...	S.C. ...	
Cunningham, Alice (B)	1923-24 ...	Responsions ...	
Darby, Ruth (B) (Mrs. Preece)	1936-39 ...	S.C. Piano VI ...	
Dawlings, M. E. (Pat) (P)	1923-31 ...	S.C. Piano VI ...	
De Moubray, Daphne (P) ...	1933-34 ...		

<i>Name</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Successes at Chorleywood College</i>	<i>Career after leaving Chorleywood College</i>
Dent, Dorothy (P) (Mrs. Rowe)	1922-28	S.C.; Part I N.F.U. Teachers' C.	At Maria Grey Tr. Coll. gained N.F.U. Teachers' C. School Teacher (blind pupils). Married.
Dutton, Avis (B)	1936-39	S.C. Piano VI, VII	C.S.M.M.G. Physiotherapist.
Easter, Muriel (B)	1941-43	S.C. (supplementary subjects); H.C.(5). Major County Schol. R.S.A. Shorthand (120) and Shorthand Typists' C. Entrance to St. Hugh's Coll.	
Fletcher, Barbara (M)	1928-30	S.C.	Oxford U. (St. Hugh's) B.A. Hons. (Philosophy, Economics and Politics). Shorthand Typist.
Furniss, Barbara (B)	1924-35	S.C.	Domestic Science Tr. C. During war Milk Officer, Registration Officer, etc. Home (including farm) now claims most time.
Gilham, Barbara (P)	1928-35	...	C.S.M.M.G. Physiotherapist.
Gill, Agnes (P) (Mrs. Long)	1940-43	...	Crafts work at her home.
Glenister, Judith (P)	1933-43	Swimming: R.L.S. Inter. C. ...	Telephonist. Married.
Grace, Muriel (P)	1933-36	Piano VI.	Telephonist.
Grant, Joan (P)	1927-37	S.C.; Part I N.F.U. Teachers' C. Home Teachers' Diploma (C.T.B.) Piano VI	Home Teachers' Diploma (C.T.B.). Home Teacher.
Gualino, Lily (P)	1924-27	...	War-time post at Home of Recovery. Braille proof-reader and transcriber.
Halén, Ingeborg (B)	1931-32	C. of Proficiency in English, Scheme A (London U.)	Studies music at her home in Italy.
Hartman, Margaret (P)	1931-32	...	School teacher (blind pupils) in Sweden.
			Domestic Science Tr. Coll. C. C.S.M.M.G. Physiotherapist.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Successes at Chorleywood College</i>	<i>Career after leaving Chorleywood College</i>
Hayman, Mollie (B)	... 1921-30 ...	... ... ...	Tr. in Social Service and Religious work. C. at the Ginner-Mawer School. Licentiate of London Coll. of Music in Elocution. Braille proof-reader. Telephonist.
Hazelwood, Jean (P)	... 1936-42 ...	... ... ...	Experience in social work at Home of Recovery etc. Home Teachers' Diploma (C.T.B.). Radiographic Technician.
Heinrich, Mary (P)	... 1927-28 & 1929 ...	... ... ...	Austrian State Exam. for teachers of English. Teacher of English (sighted pupils) in Vienna. Shorthand Typist.
Henderson, Ruby (P)	... 1934-39 ...	S.C. R.S.A. Shorthand (100) ...	At Maria Grey Tr. Coll. gained N.F.U. Teachers' C. School teacher (sighted pupils). Organising Sec. U.G.S. for Social Service. Married.
Henwood, Dorothy (M) (Mrs. Griesinger)	... 1924-28 ...	S.C. Part I N.F.U. Teachers' C.	At Royal Coll. of Music gained A.R.C.M. During war, organist. Teacher of Music (blind and sighted pupils).
Hett, Elaine (B)	... 1922-34 ...	S.C. Piano VI, VII. ...	Cambridge U (Newnham) B.A. Hons. (Theology). Diploma in Religious Education at Selly Oak Tr. Coll. Teacher of Bible Study to students of Diocesan School. Teacher by correspondence for Dalvey Coll. Braille proof-reader.
Hitchcock, Ruth (B)	... 1923-35 ...	S.C. Entrance to Newnham Coll.	Telephonist. Died 1929.
Hopson, Phyllis (P)	... 1924-28 ...	... ... ...
Howard-Jones, Stella (B)	... 1921-22 ...	... ... ...
Javorsky, Marianne (B)	... 1929-30 1932-33 ...	C. of Proficiency in English, Scheme A (London U.) ...	Member of Religious Community of St. Paul's (Paris); teacher music, etc. (blind pupils).
Jervis, Betty (P)	... 1938-43 ...	S.C.	At Diocesan Tr. Coll. gained Teachers' C. School teacher of (a) sighted; (b) blind pupils.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Successes at Chorleywood College</i>	<i>Career after leaving Chorleywood College</i>
John, Doris (B)	1931-40	S.C.; H.C.(3); R.S.A. Inter. and Advanced Typewriting. Short-hand (100). Piano VI.	Shorthand Typist.
John, Evelyn (B)	1938-44	S.C.	Telephonist. Died 1945.
Judd, Mabel (P)	1930-35	...	At Mrs. Spry's Flower Decoration School gained the Diploma in Floral Art (R.H.S.). Flower Decorations.
Kennedy, Dorothy (B)	1922-28	...	Tr. in Osteopathy and Manipulation.
Kennett, Mary (B)	1927-34	...	Tr. in kennel-work. Posts as kennel maid; governess-companion; companion-house-keeper.
King, Barbara (B)	1930-33	...	At St. Christopher's Coll. Sunday School Teachers' C. Archbishop's Diploma. Church work in Canada. Charge of stall in hospital.
King, Freda (P)	1921-27	...	Tr. in industrial handwork.
Kirke, Diana (P)	1932-33	...	At Rachel McMillan Tr. Coll. gained Nursery School Diploma. At Emergency Tr. Coll. gained Teachers' C. Nursery and Infant School Teacher (sighted pupils). Handwork, etc. at her home.
Knight, Irene (P)	1926-32	...	Died 1928.
Lambert, Winifred (P)	1928-32	...	Tr. (a) Day Nursery Work; (b) General Nursing. Hospital and Private Nursing. Married.
Lansley, Julia (P)	1929-36	...	Occupational Therapy C. School post (sighted invalid children). Home Teacher.
Layzelle, Dora (B)	1921-28	Piano VI	U. Courses in Dramatic Art and towards B.A. (Vancouver). Posts held include journalism for paper.
Loveday, Jean (M) (Mrs. Wauchope)	1933-36	...	Became a naturalised American. Married.
Macara, Margaret (P)	1922-32	Home Teachers' (C.T.B.)	...
Macgillivray, Clare (M)	1939	...	...
Martin, Constance (P) (Mrs. Peruzzi)	1922-23	...	...

<i>Name</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Successes at Chorleywood College</i>	<i>Career after leaving Chorleywood College</i>
Matthews, Marcheta (P)	1937-44	S.C.; R.S.A. Shorthand (80); Swimming: R.L.S. Inter. C. and Bronze Medallion	Secretarial work. Telephonist. Married. Studied Music and Elocution in Glasgow. A.L.C.M. Elocution. At Manchester U. studied Social Administra- tion. Clerical posts. Runs Guest House.
Mattinson, Sheila (B) (Mrs. Holtom)	1937-42	...	
McRobie, Margaret (P)	1925-30	...	
Metcalfe, Dorothy (P)	1930-37	S.C.	
Middleton, Ethel (B)	1923-29	St. Christophers' Sunday School C. (Teachers'). Piano VI	
Miller-Johnstone, Hazel (M)	1930-32	...	At "sighted" school gained S.C. Domestic Science Tr. Coll. C. During war joined A.T.S. becoming a Junior Commander. Catering officer in hospital C.S.M.M.G. Physiotherapist. Married. War work included serving in W.A.S.B.I. (Burma). Secretarial Tr. and posts. At Rachel McMillan Tr. Coll. gained N.F.U. Teachers' C. Later gained Montessori C. Nursery School posts. War-time Superin- tendent of Nursery Schools. Infant School Teacher (sighted pupils).
Moore, Mary (B) (Mrs. Cranfield)	1921-27	...	
Moreton, Betty (M)	1932-40	Swimming: R.L.S. Inter. C.	
Murtagh, Suzanne (P)	1928-34	S.C.; Part I N.F.U. Teachers' C.	
Nicholson, Rose (B)	1938-44	S.C.; H.C.(4)	R.S.A. Shorthand (120). Shorthand Typist. Married.
Orman, Vivie (P) (Mrs. Sims-Hilditch)	1925-28	Piano VI	
Osler, Helen (B)	1929-32	S.C.; Cello VI	C.S.M.M.G. Physiotherapist. At "sighted" school gained S.C.
Palmer, Rita (M)	1938-42	...	St. Andrews U. M.A. Jordanhill T. Coll. for Teachers' C. School teacher (blind pupils). Braille proof-reader. Died 1937.
Park, Janet (B)	1922-26	Responsions	
Park, Freda (B) (Mrs. Arrowsmith)	1934-37	S.C.; Piano VI	C.S.M.M.G. Physiotherapist. Married. At Royal Coll. of Music gained A.R.C.M.
Partridge, Joan (P)	1921-26	Piano VI	Later gained L.R.A.M. Teacher of music (blind and sighted pupils).

<i>Name</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Successes at Chorleywood College</i>	<i>Career after leaving Chorleywood College</i>
Spittlhouse, Winifred (P), <i>see</i> Lambert.			
Squires, Jean (P) ...	1930-41	S.C. ...	Shorthand Typist.
Stapley, Joan (P) ...	1936-40	... ..	War-time work in Day Nurseries and Hospital, Shorthand Typist.
Stephenson, Sylvia (P) ...	1930-38	S.C.; Piano VI ...	C.S.M.M.G. Tr. Singing, etc., at Guildhall School of Music. Physiotherapist.
Støre, Mildrid (B) ...	1928	... ..	Teacher of languages in Oslo.
Skrimshine, Amy (B) ...	1925	... ..	Studying music privately.
Taylor, Margaret (P) ...	1941-43	... ..	Teacher (blind pupils) in Sweden. Assists in Braille Library.
Tisell, Marga (P) ...	1923	... ..	...
	1930	... ..	...
True, Beryl (P) (Mrs. Weeks)	1936-41	S.C.; Swimming: R.L.S. Inter. C. and Bronze Medallion ...	At Maria Grey Tr. Coll. gained N.F.U. Teachers' C. School teacher (sighted pupils). Married.
Turner, Hilda (B) ...	1921-28	Piano VI, VII	...
Tyrrell, Ethel (P) ...	1922-24	... ..	Tr. at Royal Academy of Music. L.R.A.M. (singing).
Wakefield, Barbara (B) ...	1921	... ..	...
	1925-30	... ..	To Royal Normal College for the Blind. Later Tr. in machine-knitting.
Wallace, Violet (B) ...	1922-27	Piano VI ...	...
Walmsley, Audrey (P) ...	1932-41	S.C.; Swimming: R.L.S. Inter. C. and Bronze Medallion ...	Diplomas in Household and Institutional Management. Assistant Matron in Schools. Assistant to Warden in Tr. Coll.
Watrous, Joy (P) ...	1935-43	...	St. Andrews U. M.A.
Watson-Taylor, Barbara (B) ...	1925-29	Entrance to Scottish U.	...
Wear, Eileen (P) ...	1929-32	...	...
Wilson, Marjorie (B) ...	1938-42	S.C.; Swimming: R.L.S. 2 bars to Bronze Medallion ...	C.S.M.M.G. Physiotherapist.
Wilson, Sarah (B) ...	1939-42	S.C.	Died 1944.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Successes at Chorleywood College</i>	<i>Career after leaving Chorleywood College</i>
Winter, Hazel (B) ...	... 1924-30	S.C.; Scholarship to Lady Margaret Hall, Piano VI, VII; Harmony VII ...	Oxford U. (Lady Margaret Hall) B.A. Hons. (History). Experience in lecturing and broadcasting. Braille proof-reading.
Wood, Marjorie (Major) (P) (Mrs. Bolton)	1928-35	S.C. ...	St. Andrew's U. M.A. 1r. at Selly Oak for N.F.U. Teachers' C. School Teacher (blind and partially sighted pupils). Married.
Wood, Marjorie (Minor) (P)	... 1926-40	S.C.; C. of Proficiency in English Scheme B (London U.). R.S.A. Inter and Advanced Typewriting, and Shorthand (100)...	Secretarial work. C.S.M.M.G. Physiotherapist. Died 1945.
Woodcraft, Joan (B)	... 1932-38	S.C.; H.C.(5); won State Schol. Parts of 1933-34 ...	C. of Society of Superintendents of Tuberculosis Institutions; State Registered Nurse. Sister in Sanatorium and in Orthopaedic Hospitals.
Worthington, Lesley (P)	... 1922-26	... ..	To Court Grange Special School. Part-time work in factory.
Wyness, Hermione (P)	... 1937-40	... ..
Young, Veronica (P)	... 1937-40	... ..
BOYS (IN PREPARATORY)			
Claricoat, John (B)	... 1940-43	... ..	To Worcester Coll. S.C.
Clore, Anthony (P)	... 1939-42	... ..	To Worcester Coll., and later to an Elementary School for blind boys.
Crunden-White, Jeremy (P)	... 1938-40	... ..	To America during war; then to Worcester Coll. Died 1947.
Debonnaire, Anthony (B) ...	... 1936-40	... ..	To Worcester Coll. S.C.; H.C.(3). At Birmingham U. (studying Modern Languages).
Griffin, Michael (P)	... 1937-40	... ..	To Worcester Coll. S.C.
Marshall, George (B)	... 1942-44	... ..	To Worcester Coll.
Poole, William (B) ...	... 1942-44	... ..	To Worcester Coll.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Successes at Chorleywood College</i>	<i>Career after leaving Chorleywood College</i>
Price, Peter (B)	1935-40	...	To Worcester Coll. S.C.; H.C.(3). Tr. as Physiotherapist.
Rance, Richard (B)	1942-44	...	To Worcester Coll.
Rogers, Barry (P)	1941-43	...	To Worcester Coll. and later to the Royal Normal Coll. for the Blind.
Ryman, Brian (P)	1941-42	...	To Sunshine House and later to an Elementary School for the Blind.
Scott, Ian (P)	1940-43	...	To Worcester Coll.
Wall, John (B)	1938-40	...	To Worcester Coll. S.C.; H.C.(4). At Oxford U. (Balliol Coll.) (studying Law).
Way, John (P)	1937-41	...	To Worcester Coll. S.C.
Willcox, Gordon (P)	1941-43	...	To the Royal School for the Blind, Birmingham.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Year of Admission</i>	<i>Successes at Chorleywood College by 1944</i>
(b)—	...	S.C.
Agar, Mary (B) ...	1942	
Bancroft, Nancy (P) ...	1943	
Banfield, Pamela (P) ...	1944	
Bidder, Mary (B) ...	1942	
Bird, Irene (P) ...	1942	
Bowen, Margaret (P) ...	1943	
Brown, Mabel (P) ...	1943	
Cable, Jean (P) ...	1944	
Chennell, Jean (P) ...	1942	
Clarke, Anne (P) ...	1941	
Cordingley, Dorothy (B) ...	1940	
Earey, Joy (P) ...	1943	
Elgar, Margaret (P) ...	1943	Piano VI
Elgar, Patricia (P) ...	1944	
Forrest, Catherine (P) ...	1943	
Franklin, Mary (P) ...	1939	S.C. Swimming : R.L.S. Bronze Medallion.
French, Janet (P) ...	1942	
Gooch, Jane (B) ...	1940	
Gough, Iris (P) ...	1943	
Hart, Patricia (B) ...	1934	S.C.
Henderson, Jean (P) ...	1944	
Higgins, Anne (P) ...	1936	S.C., Swimming : R.L.S. Bronze Medallion.
Hinton, Patricia (P) ...	1943	
Hodge, Joyce (B) ...	1943	
Hollins, Anne (P) ...	1944	
Honeyman, Audrey (P) ...	1943	
House, Pamela (P) ...	1943	
Hyde, Joan (B) ...	1942	Piano VII, VIII.
Jarvis, Josephine (B) ...	1940	
Jarvis, Patricia (B) ...	1942	
Jefferies, Monica (B) ...	1943	
Jefferiss, Sheila (B) ...	1943	

*Year of Successes at Chorleywood College
Admission by 1944*

Jennens, Sheila (P)...	...	1935	S.C. Swimming: R.L.S. Inter C. and Bronze Medallion.
Jennison, Gwendolen (P)	...	1944	
Jorden, Patricia (P)	...	1942	
Lawson, Sylvia (P)	...	1942	
Lee, Greta (B) ...	...	1939
Leighton, Barbara (P)	...	1942	
Le Noury, Pamela (B)	...	1943	
McGrogan, Thelma (P)	...	1944	
Millward, Jean (B)	...	1939	
Palmer, Pamela (P)	...	1944	
Redman, Damaris (P)	...	1942	
Rogerson, Mary (P)	...	1943	
Sargent, Hazel (B) ...	...	1944
Speakman, Mary (P)	...	1944	
Stephens, Pamela (B)	...	1943	
Stonehewer, Beryl (P)	...	1942	
Thorpe, Stella (B) ...	...	1942
Ulph, Valerie (P) ...	...	1943
Walker, Joyce (P) ... (B)	...	1944	
Waterhouse, Christine (B)	...	1943	
Wheeldon, Anne (P)	...	1936	
Whittenbury, Anne (B)	...	1940	
Wittrick, Margaret (P)	...	1944	
Wynne, Bernice (P)	...	1944	
			Swimming: R.L.S. Inter. C.
			Piano VI, VII.
			BOYS (IN PREPARATORY)
Crunden-White, Paul (P)	1943	
Moss-Norbury, Joseph (P)...	...	1944	



